

Drivers and outcomes of brand attachment

Arnold Japutra (2014)

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Drivers and Outcomes of Brand Attachment

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Abstract

Brand attachment refers to the cognitive and affective bonding between consumers and ‘their’ brands. Building consumer-brand relationships is becoming increasingly important for academics and practitioners. Academics argue that comprehending the consumer-brand relationship provides insight to consumers’ choice of brands related to their identity. The value of consumer-brand relationships has been well documented in the marketing literature, in the context of increasing consumers’ defensive acts against the effect of negative information and minimizing the number of consumer desertions. Building consumer-brand relationships underpins the long-term prosperity of brands. Extant research reveals several constructs of consumer-brand relationships, including brand attachment. Recently, brand attachment has received much attention because it is a salient concept in explaining favourable consumer behaviours. By understanding brand attachment, firms are able to capture consumers’ minds and hearts. Thus, brand attachment is the focus of this thesis.

Research on brand attachment is relatively new. Although a limited number of researchers have documented the drivers and outcomes of brand attachment, they usually focus on a single category examination (e.g. retailing). Moreover, these studies used measurement of brand attachment that only reflects emotional bonding. Hence, this study investigates the drivers and outcomes of brand attachment to reflect both cognitive and emotional bonding across categories. In addition, this research examines the role of attachment style. Attachment style refers to a systematic pattern of expectations, emotions and behaviours within relationships, from a particular history of attachment experiences. Attachment style and brand attachment are two distinct constructs.

This study used a mixed-method design to answer the research question. First, an exploratory study, using semi-structured interviews and a projective technique (sentence completion), was designed to validate the research model. Afterwards, a questionnaire was designed to test the hypotheses within the research model. 432 questionnaires were analysed, using Structural Equation Modelling (SEM).

This study offers several key contributions. First, this study goes beyond a single category examination to look across categories. Second, unlike previous studies, which only used

emotional brand attachment, this study also measures cognitive brand attachment. Third, this study offers four important drivers of brand attachment: *ideal self-congruence*, *sensory brand experience*, *brand responsiveness* and *CSR beliefs*. The results also indicate a significant relationship between brand attachment with brand loyalty and resilience to negative information. Fourth, this study demonstrates empirical support to the positive link between sensory brand experience and brand attachment. This empirical support confirms the argument of researchers who proposed brand experience as one of the key determinants of brand attachment. Published research to date has yet to empirically test the link between brand attachment and resilience to negative information. Fifth, this study is the first to show that stronger brand attachment leads to higher resilience towards negative information. It is evident that when a strong bond between the consumer and brand has been established, they are more likely to forgive the brand when it is guilty of mistakes and violations.

Sixth, the results also provide better understanding to the nomological network in which ideal self-congruence operates. Previous studies show that ideal self-congruence has a direct positive effect toward brand loyalty. However, this study reveals that ideal self-congruence is fully mediated by brand attachment. This means increasing ideal self-congruence does not directly increase brand loyalty; higher ideal self-congruence leads to stronger brand attachment, which in the end leads to brand loyalty. In addition to that, this study also displays that brand attachment fully mediates and partially mediates the relationships between the four independent variables on brand loyalty and resilience to negative information. Finally, this study believes that not all consumers are the same. Insecure consumers are hard to manage and handle. It can be seen that the links between brand attachment, with its antecedents and consequences, are moderated by attachment style – especially consumers that exhibit insecurities.

Practitioners could use this study as guidelines to understand how to maximize brand attachment and leverage consumers' loyalty and forgiveness. For instance, marketers could start developing marketing activities that support their consumers' ideal-self. It should be noted that brand responsiveness is the strongest factor that influences the degree of attachment. A firm should create a strategy that continuously attempts to understand consumers' interest, perspectives and preferences (autonomy). Limitations and directions for further research are also discussed.

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Preface

This thesis is original, unpublished work of the author, Arnold Japutra. The author conducted this project as part of the requirements to obtain the degree of Doctor of Philosophy. The supervisory team of this project were Prof. Yuksel Ekinici and Prof. Lyndon Simkin. The subjects of the fieldwork were consumers within the United Kingdom (UK). Oxford Brookes University's Ethics Committee approved the data collection.

The aim of this study is to investigate the antecedents and consequences of brand attachment. A mixed-method design was designed to answer the research questions. First, an exploratory study (Chapter 5), using semi-structured interviews and projective techniques, was conducted, in order to refine and validate the research model. Thematic analysis was employed to analyse the data gathered from the exploratory study. Second, a survey (Chapter 6 and Chapter 7), using mail and electronic questionnaires, was undertaken in order to test the research hypotheses.

Parts of Chapter 2 and Chapter 3 have been presented [Japutra, A., Ekinici, Y. and Simkin, L. (2012), 'Investigating the antecedents of brand attachment'. Paper presented at the Academy of Marketing Conference 2012, Southampton, July] and published [Japutra, A., Ekinici, Y., Simkin, L. and Nguyen, B. (2014), 'The dark side of brand attachment: a conceptual framework of brand attachment's detrimental outcomes', *The Marketing Review*, 14(3), pp. 245-264]. Additionally, a version of Chapter 5 has been presented [Japutra, A., Ekinici, Y. and Simkin, L. (2014), 'The Determinants and outcomes of brand attachment'. Paper presented at the Academy of Marketing Conference 2014, Bournemouth, July] and published [Japutra, A., Ekinici, Y. and Simkin, L. (2014), 'Exploring brand attachment, its determinants and outcomes', *Journal of Strategic Marketing*, (ahead-of-print), pp. 1-15]. A version of Chapter 7 has been presented [Japutra, A., Ekinici, Y. and Simkin, L. (2014), 'What Drives Brand Attachment?'. Paper presented at the 43rd European Marketing Academy Conference (EMAC), Valencia, Spain, June].

Table of Contents

Abstract	ii
Acknowledgements	iv
Preface	v
Table of Contents	vi
List of Tables	ix
List of Figures	xi
 Chapter 1 Introduction	
1.1 Background	1
1.2 Aim and Objectives	4
1.3 Contribution of the Study	4
1.4 Overview of the Study	6
 Chapter 2 Foundations of Brand Attachment	
2.1 Introduction	8
2.2 The Meaning of Brand	9
2.3 The Meaning of the Word “Attachment”	11
2.4 The Conceptualisations of Brand Attachment	15
2.5 Similarity and Distinction of Brand Attachment with Other Constructs	20
2.5.1 Brand Attachment with Brand Attitude	26
2.5.2 Brand Attachment with Involvement	27
2.5.3 Brand Attachment with Satisfaction	28
2.5.4 Brand Attachment with Brand Loyalty	29
2.6 Measurements of Brand Attachment	31
2.7 Chapter Summary	36
 Chapter 3 Antecedents of Brand Attachment	
3.1 Introduction	38
3.2 Brand Attachment in Marketing	39
3.3 Antecedents of Brand Attachment	45
3.3.1. Definition of Self-Concept	46
3.3.2. Self-Congruence and Consumer Behaviour	47
3.3.3. Experience and Brand Experience	49
3.3.4. Brand Experience and Consumer Behaviour	50
3.3.5. Brand Responsiveness	51
3.3.6. Brand Responsiveness and Consumer Behaviour	56
3.4 Moderating Variable: Attachment Style	57
3.4.1 Distinction between Attachment Style and Brand Attachment	61
3.4.2 Attachment Style and Consumer Behaviour	62
3.5 Consequences of Brand Attachment	68
3.6 Chapter Summary	69

Chapter 4 The Research Model

4.1 Introduction	73
4.2 The Research Model	73
4.3 Hypotheses Development	79
4.3.1 Effect of Self-Congruence on Brand Attachment	79
4.3.2 Effect of Brand Experience on Brand Attachment	85
4.3.3 Effect of Brand Responsiveness on Brand Attachment	89
4.3.4 Effect of Brand Attachment on Brand Loyalty	93
4.3.5 Mediating Effect of Brand Attachment on the Relationship between Self-Congruence, Brand Experience, Brand Responsiveness, and Brand Loyalty	95
4.3.6 Moderating Effect of Attachment Style	96
4.4 Chapter Summary	97

Chapter 5 Findings of the Preliminary Study

5.1 Introduction	100
5.2 Research Design	100
5.2.1 Instrument	101
5.2.2 Issues of Reliability and Validity	104
5.2.3 Sample	105
5.2.4 Procedure	106
5.3 Demographic Profile of the Sample	107
5.4 Analysis of the Data	108
5.4.1 Attachment	108
5.4.2 Antecedents of Brand Attachment	110
5.4.3 Consequences of Brand Attachment	126
5.5 Revisiting the Research Model	136
5.6 Chapter Summary	139

Chapter 6 Methodology

6.1 Introduction	142
6.2 Research Philosophy	142
6.3 Research Design	145
6.4 The Research Model	147
6.5 The Research Instrument	150
6.6 Measures	152
6.7 Pilot Testing	156
6.8 Sample	157
6.9 Data Collection Procedure	159
6.10 Data Analysis Technique	160
6.11 Reliability, Validity and Model Fit	161
6.12 Chapter Summary	163

Chapter 7 Findings of the Survey

7.1 Introduction	164
7.2 Descriptive Analysis of the Demographics	164
7.2.1 Demographic Profile of the Respondents	165
7.2.2 The Brands and Other Profiles	168
7.3 Reliability and Validity Analysis	171

7.4 Validity of the Research Models	184
7.5 Hypothesis Testing: Antecedents and Consequences of Brand Attachment	189
7.6 Testing the Moderation Effect of the Attachment Style on the Relationship between Brand Attachment and Brand Loyalty	195
7.7 Chapter Summary	209
Chapter 8 Discussion	
8.1 Introduction	211
8.2 General Discussion	211
8.3 Objective 1: Review of the Literature	213
8.4 Objective 2: Developing a Research Model	216
8.5 Objective 3: Assessing Reliability and Validity of the Research Model	218
8.6 Objective 4: Testing the Hypotheses Proposed in the Research Model	223
Chapter 9 Conclusions and Reflections	
9.1 Introduction	234
9.2 Theoretical Contribution of the Study	234
9.3 Managerial Implications	241
9.4 Limitations and Further Research	244
9.5 Reflections	246
References	252
Appendices	269
Appendix 1: Semi-Structured Interviews - Protocol	269
Appendix 2: Information Questions	271
Appendix 3: Sentence Completion	272
Appendix 4: Semi-Structured Interviews - Transcription	273
Appendix 5: Research Questionnaire after Pretesting	282
Appendix 6: Research Questionnaire (Redesigned)	288
Appendix 7: Skewness and Kurtosis	293
Appendix 8: Exploratory Factor Analysis to Assess Common-Method Variance	295
Appendix 9: Hierarchical Regression – Brand Loyalty	296
Appendix 10: Hierarchical Regression – Resilience to Negative Information	299

List of Tables

Table 2.1	Some Constructs within the Realm of Consumer-Brand Relationship	23
Table 2.2	Brand Attachment and Behaviours	25
Table 2.3	Differences between Brand Attachment and Brand Attitude	27
Table 2.4	Differences between Brand Attachment and Involvement	28
Table 2.5	Differences between Brand Attachment and Satisfaction	29
Table 2.6	Differences between Brand Attachment and Brand Loyalty	30
Table 2.7	Escalas' Self-Brand Connection Scale Items	33
Table 2.8	Measurement of Brand Attachment in Previous Research	35
Table 3.1	Hazan and Shaver's Adult Attachment Types	58
Table 6.1	Assumptions of the Two Research Paradigms	144
Table 6.2	Scale Items for Self-Congruence	152
Table 6.3	Scale Items for Brand Experience	153
Table 6.4	Scale Items for Brand Responsiveness	153
Table 6.5	Scale Items for CSR Beliefs	154
Table 6.6	Scale Items for Brand Attachment	154
Table 6.7	Scale Items for Brand Loyalty	155
Table 6.8	Scale Items for Resilience to Negative Information	155
Table 6.9	Scale Items for Attachment Style	155
Table 6.10	Sample Questions in the Pilot-testing	157
Table 7.1	Occupation (n = 416)	167
Table 7.2	Behavioural Characteristics of the Respondents	170
Table 7.3	Standardized Loadings for Self-Congruence	172
Table 7.4	Descriptive Statistics, Bivariate Correlations, and Average Variances Extracted for Self-Congruence	172
Table 7.5	Standardized Loadings for Brand Experience	173
Table 7.6	Descriptive Statistics, Bivariate Correlations, and Average Variances Extracted for Brand Experience	174
Table 7.7	Exploratory Factor Analysis of Brand Experience, Varimax Rotation (n = 432)	174
Table 7.8	Standardized Loadings for Brand Responsiveness	175
Table 7.9	Descriptive Statistics, Bivariate Correlations, and Average Variances Extracted for Brand Responsiveness	175
Table 7.10	Exploratory Factor Analysis of Brand Responsiveness, Varimax Rotation (n = 432)	176
Table 7.11	Standardized Loadings for Brand Attachment	177
Table 7.12	Descriptive Statistics, Bivariate Correlations, and Average Variances Extracted for Brand Attachment	177
Table 7.13	The Measurement Model: Descriptive Statistics, Bivariate Correlations and Average Variances Extracted	180
Table 7.14	The Measurement Model: Descriptive Statistics, Bivariate Correlations, and Average Variances Extracted (Revised)	183
Table 7.15	Result of Structural Equations Analyses for the Full Mediation Model	186

Table 7.16	Result of Structural Equations Analyses for Full and Partial Mediation Models	188
Table 7.17	Gender: Result of Variance Explained (R^2)	191
Table 7.18	Gender: Result of Structural Equations Analyses	191
Table 7.19	Gender: Result of Variance Explained (R^2)	191
Table 7.20	Gender: Result of Structural Equations Analyses for Full and Partial Mediation Models	192
Table 7.21	Age Group: Result of Variance Explained (R^2)	193
Table 7.22	Age Group: Result of Structural Equations Analyses	193
Table 7.23	Age Group: Result of Variance Explained (R^2)	194
Table 7.24	Age Group: Result of Structural Equations Analyses for Full and Partial Mediation Models	194
Table 7.25	Standardized Loadings for Attachment Style	197
Table 7.26	Descriptive Statistics, Bivariate Correlations, and Average Variances Extracted for Attachment Style	198
Table 7.27	Exploratory Factor Analysis of Attachment Style, Varimax Rotation ($n = 432$)	198
Table 7.28	Descriptive Statistics, Bivariate Correlations, and Average Variances Extracted	200
Table 7.29	The Moderation Model: Descriptive Statistics, Bivariate Correlations, and Average Variances Extracted	203
Table 7.30	Overall Model Fit Statistics	206
Table 7.31	Result of Moderation Model	206
Table 7.32	Summary of the Results of the Hypotheses Testing	208
Table 9.1	Summary of the Results of the Hypotheses Testing	241

List of Figures

Figure 2.1	The Development of Security-Based Strategies	14
Figure 2.2	Fournier's BRQ Framework	16
Figure 2.3	Schmitt's Consumer Psychology Model of Brands	18
Figure 2.4	The Development of the Conceptualisation of Brand Attachment	21
Figure 3.1	Antecedents of Emotional Attachments to Brands	41
Figure 3.2	Conceptual Model on Brand Attachment Strength	42
Figure 3.3	The Self-Determination Theory Continuum	53
Figure 3.4	Bartholomew and Horowitz's Model of Adult Attachment	59
Figure 3.5	Obegi <i>et al.</i> 's Model of Adult Attachment	61
Figure 3.6	The Formation of Secondary Attachment Strategies	64
Figure 3.7	Relationship Marketing Segmentation Based on Business Attachment	66
Figure 3.8	Matrix of Attachment Styles Across Relationship Level	67
Figure 4.1	Research Model	74
Figure 4.2	Comprehensive Research Model	78
Figure 6.1	Mixed Methods Strategy of the Study	146
Figure 6.2	The Full Mediation Model	147
Figure 6.3	The Partial Mediation Model	148
Figure 6.4	The Moderation Model	149
Figure 6.5	Questionnaire Design Process	152
Figure 7.1	Gender (n = 427)	165
Figure 7.2	Age Group (n = 428)	165
Figure 7.3	Nationality (n = 427)	166
Figure 7.4	Marital Status (n = 428)	166
Figure 7.5	Level of Education (n = 427)	167
Figure 7.6	Income Bracket (n = 373)	168
Figure 7.7	Length of Usage (n = 431)	168
Figure 7.8	Frequency of Purchasing (n = 431)	169
Figure 7.9	Last Purchased (n = 430)	169
Figure 7.10	Frequency of Usage (n = 430)	170
Figure 7.11	The Measurement Model	179
Figure 7.12	The Measurement Model (Revised)	182
Figure 7.13	The Research Model I (Full Mediation)	185
Figure 7.14	The Research Model II (Partial Mediation)	187

Figure 7.15	The Moderation Model	196
Figure 7.16	Measurement Model with Attachment Style	199
Figure 7.17	The Measurement Model with Attachment Style (Revised)	202
Figure 7.18	Results of the Moderation Model	205
Figure 8.1	The Research Model	217
Figure 8.2	The Research Model (Revised)	220
Figure 8.3	The Moderation Model	222
Figure 8.4	The Full Mediation Model	225
Figure 8.5	The Most Valid Model: The Partial Mediation Model	226
Figure 8.6	The Moderation Model	230

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

CEOs from various firms and industries herald the importance on learning ways to strengthen bond with consumers (IBM, 2010). Creating and maintaining brand attachment may well be part of the solution to a growing concern regarding observed reducing levels of brand loyalty. This requires a clearer understanding of the components of brand attachment and how best to nurture this emotional and cognitive bonding between consumers and their preferred brands. In an extensive global survey conducted by Ernst & Young (2011), they find that consumers are exhibiting lower brand loyalty, which increases the challenges for businesses to find new ways to hook their customers. Extant research has established the link between satisfaction and loyalty (e.g. Anderson & Srinivasan, 2003). However, Reichheld (2003) notes that satisfaction lacks the consistency in demonstrating connection to loyalty. Thus, it is critical for firms in finding ways to better explain loyalty.

Chandrashekar *et al.* (2007) urge researchers to focus on the value of monitoring consumers' relationship quality (e.g. attachment), since it has a profound impact on favourable consumer behaviours. Reibstein *et al.* (2009, p.1) construe that the focus of the field of marketing is "about the connection of the firm to its customers". Recently academics have advocated that brand attachment is a crucial concept in relationship marketing, increasing emotional bonding and loyalty (Schmalz & Orth, 2012). Moreover, Brocato *et al.* (2014) note that promoting attachment between firms and consumers is becoming a foundation of relationship marketing strategy. Not only in the B2C sector, but also the B2B sector acknowledges the importance of attachment. Leek and Christodoulides (2012) indicate that emotional qualities are part of brand value that needs to be delivered, together with the functional qualities. These authors argue that these emotional qualities help buyers in making decisions.

Research on brand attachment is relatively new, as its conceptualisation is still developing. Thomson *et al.* (2005) conceptualise brand attachment as embodying emotional bonding. However, later research (Park *et al.*, 2010) extended the conceptualisation of brand

attachment to also embody cognitive bonding. It has been proposed that attachment encompasses various constructs (e.g. attitude) in explaining higher level of consumers' behaviours, which reflect investment of resources (e.g. Park & MacInnis, 2006). For instance, Thomson *et al.* (2005) argue that attachment plays a role in influencing consumer behaviours that promote profitability and customer lifetime value. An enduring relationship (e.g. love for brands) indicates attachment as one of the crucial components (Batra *et al.*, 2012). Although the literature has stated the importance of attachment, little is known about how a firm can develop strong emotional ties between the consumers and the brand (Brocato *et al.*, 2014). Hence, Park *et al.* (2010, p.14) urge researchers to examine "how marketers can enhance brand attachment". To that end, this research offers a framework on how to build stronger consumers' attachment.

Not only academics, practitioners have also been putting efforts into building brand attachment. For instance, Google created an advertisement – known as the Google India Ad – that sparks emotion of its viewers. The storyline of this advertisement started with a grandfather sitting with her granddaughter while storytelling on his childhood friendship. The conversation ended with a strong urge to meet but also disappointment from the grandfather not knowing the whereabouts of his childhood friend. Determined to make the reunion happen, the granddaughter started to track her grandfather's childhood friend using Google. This story highlights that practitioners consider emotionally attaching consumer to a brand to be of importance.

Christodoulides and de Chernatony (2010) note that consultancy and market research firms (e.g. WPP Brand Dynamics) put forward 'bonding' and 'affinity' to measure brand equity. These authors highlight the fact that not only academics but also practitioners believe brand attachment to be a salient construct. In addition, there is a phenomenon these days that consumers are not afraid to display their strong attachment towards the firm or brand – for instance, more than 2,000 consumers of a gym chain in the US have already put a tattoo of the firm's logo on their bodies (BBC, 2014). So how do marketers build stronger brand attachment? Does brand attachment increase the predictive power of favourable consumer behaviours? This study addresses these questions by developing and testing a conceptual framework of brand attachment based on psychological theories (e.g. attachment theory).

Building consumer-brand relationships is important to the long-term prosperity of brands and plays a role in today's brand success (Veloutsou & Moutinho, 2009). Fournier (1998) finds that brands adhere to systems that consumers create to give meaning to their lives. Schmitt (2012) indicates brand attachment to be a fundamental construct that premeditates the connection between a consumer and a brand. As a result, revenue and profit from strong attachment are less vulnerable to disruption (Grisaffe & Nguyen, 2011). Strong attachment towards a brand is crucial for the success of brand extensions (Fedorikhin *et al.*, 2008). In consideration of this, a growing body of research (e.g. Orth *et al.*, 2010) has focused on what it means for consumers to connect with brands and the implications of that attachment. For instance, Jang *et al.* (2015) show that store attachment leads to store loyalty. Another recent study (Hudson *et al.*, 2015) reveals that emotional attachment positively influences brand relationship quality and word-of-mouth.

Although recent research supports the application of attachment theory in marketing, existing research for brand attachment is mainly exploratory or limited to consumer-company relationships in a single category industry (i.e. retailing or banking) and human brands (e.g. singers, politicians or athletes) (Grisaffe & Nguyen, 2011; Orth *et al.*, 2010; Vlachos *et al.*, 2010; Thomson, 2006). The majority of existing attachment studies determine attachment as an affective phenomenon evoked by the variety of emotions and left behind the cognitive part. For example, Thomson *et al.* (2005) use the term "emotional attachment" and suggest three feelings - affection, passion and connection – are evoked by brand attachment. Similar to Thomson *et al.*'s (2005) three feelings, Vlachos *et al.* (2010) use a different term, "consumer-firm emotional attachment".

Carroll and Ahuvia (2006) and Albert *et al.*, (2008) use the term "love" and extract 11 dimensions of the love construct to explain consumer-brand relationship. Nevertheless, several academics (e.g. Brocato *et al.*, 2014; Park *et al.*, 2010) note that further research is needed towards better understanding of antecedents and consequences of brand attachment across many domains, in order for firms to achieve favourable results (e.g. prevent consumers from switching providers).

This study used a mixed-method design to answer the research questions. First, an exploratory study, using semi-structured interviews and projective techniques (sentence completion), was designed to validate the research model. Afterwards, descriptive research

using a questionnaire survey was designed to test the hypotheses within the research model. In total, 432 questionnaires were analysed using Structural Equation Modelling (SEM).

1.2 Aim and Objectives

Taken from the discussion above, the aim of this study is to investigate the antecedents and consequences of brand attachment. In order to achieve this aim, four objectives have been outlined. These objectives are:

1. Review the literature on consumer-brand relationships, in particular brand attachment.
2. Develop a research model that explains factors influencing the formation and the outcomes of stronger brand attachment.
3. Validate the research model.
4. Test the hypotheses proposed in the research model.

1.3 Contribution of the Study

Given this backdrop, this study offers several key contributions. First, this study goes beyond a single category examination to look across categories. Previous studies (Orth *et al.*, 2010; Vlachos *et al.*, 2010) examined attachment within a single category, such as retailing. Second this study also measures cognitive brand attachment, unlike previous studies, which only used emotional brand attachment. Most existing research (e.g. Dolbec & Chebat, 2013; Malär *et al.*, 2011) encapsulates brand attachment largely based on emotions, such as passion, affection and connection (Thomson *et al.*, 2005). The conceptualisation and measurement of brand attachment in this study fosters both affective and cognitive bonding, following Park *et al.*'s (2010) measurement of brand attachment, which includes brand-self connection and brand prominence.

Third, informed by two theories (attachment theory and self-concept theory) and findings from the exploratory study, the outcome of the conceptual synthesis includes four affective and cognitive dimensions:

- Ideal self-congruence,
- Sensory brand experience,
- Brand responsiveness and
- Corporate social responsibility (CSR) beliefs.

The results also indicate a significant relationship between brand attachment and two favourable consequences, namely brand loyalty and resilience to negative information.

Fourth, this study demonstrates empirical support to the positive link between sensory brand experience and brand attachment. This responds to the call of Schmitt (2013), which suggests that the relationship between brand experience and brand attachment is understudied. This empirical support confirms the argument of researchers who proposed brand experience as one of the key determinants of brand attachment – for instance, Brakus *et al.* (2009) propose that in the long-run, brand experience may lead to attachment. Although a study (Dolbec & Chebat, 2013) in the context of retailing has shown that brand experience leads to attachment, this previous study used measurement of brand attachment that only included emotional bonding.

Published research to date has yet to empirically test the link between brand attachment and resilience to negative information. Fifth, this study is the first to show that stronger brand attachment leads to higher resilience towards negative information. This confirms the proposition, suggested by Bhattacharya and Sen (2003), that resilience to negative information is the consequence of strong consumers' identification with the brand. It is evident that when strong bonds between the consumers and brands have been established, the consumers are more likely to forgive the brand when they are guilty of mistakes and violations. This finding extends Schmalz and Orth's (2012) proposition, which acknowledges brand attachment acts as a buffer to firms' unethical behaviours, by showing that stronger attachment leads to higher resilience to negative information.

Sixth, the results also provide better understanding to the nomological network in which ideal self-congruence operates. Previous studies (e.g. Nam *et al.*, 2011) show that ideal self-congruence has a direct positive effect toward brand loyalty. However, this study reveals that ideal self-congruence is fully mediated by brand attachment. This means increasing ideal self-congruence does not directly increase brand loyalty; higher ideal self-congruence leads to stronger brand attachment, which in the end lead to brand loyalty.

In addition to that, this study also displays that brand attachment fully mediates and partially mediates the relationships between the four independent variables on brand loyalty and resilience to negative information. Brand attachment partially mediates sensory brand

experience and CSR beliefs on brand loyalty, whereas the relationships between self-congruence and brand responsiveness on brand loyalty are fully mediated. In conjunction, brand attachment is known to partially mediate brand responsiveness and CSR beliefs on resilience to negative information. While, the relationships between ideal self-congruence and sensory brand experience on resilience to negative information are fully mediated.

Finally, this study believes that not all consumers are the same. It has been proposed that consumers' relationships with brands may differ due to their attachment style (Mende *et al.*, 2013; Mende & Bolton, 2011). Insecure consumers are hard to manage and handle (Paulssen, 2009; Thomson & Johnson, 2006). This can be seen from the results of this study that the links between brand attachment with its antecedents and consequences are moderated by attachment style – especially consumers that exhibit insecurities. Limitations and directions for further research are presented.

1.4 Overview of the Study

The present study consists of 8 chapters with details as follows:

Chapter 2 provides the literature foundations that guide the framework of this study. It starts by discussing the meaning of brand, attachment and the literature of brand attachment, which is the main construct of this study. Moving along, the chapter continues the discussion into the conceptualisation of brand attachment, distinctions and similarities of brand attachment with other constructs and measurements of brand attachment.

Chapter 3 starts by reviewing research on brand attachment in the marketing literature. Following the literature review, the chapter provides explanation of the selection of antecedents and the discussion on how it relates to consumer behaviour. Subsequently, the chapter moves onto a discussion of the reasons for choosing attachment style as the moderating variable. The chapter ends with a discussion regarding choosing brand loyalty as the key consequence of brand attachment.

Chapter 4 discusses about the research model and the research hypotheses within this study. First, it starts with explanation on the development of the research model, which is informed by two main theories and previous research. Second, the development of each research hypotheses in the study is presented.

Chapter 5 is the preliminary study. The chapter starts with the objective of the preliminary study and then moves onto the research design. Within the research design, the discussion includes the instrument, reliability and validity, sample, and the procedure of the preliminary study. It continues with the analysis of the data and findings. The chapter ends with revisiting the research model and tentative conclusion.

Chapter 6 describes the methodology for the main survey. The chapter starts with the research paradigm that informs the study. Following the research paradigm, the chapter provides information on revising the research model after the preliminary study. The chapter then discusses the instrument, the measures, reliability and validity issues, sample and procedure.

Chapter 7 starts with presenting the descriptive analysis of the demographics. Next, the chapter discusses the reliability and validity of the constructs. The chapter then continues with testing the hypotheses in the research model.

Chapter 8 provides the discussion of the findings. The chapter starts with a brief explanation on the background of conducting this study. Then, the chapter provides a review of the research aim and objectives. Finally, the chapter presents the discussions on the findings of the survey.

Chapter 9 provides the contribution, implications and reflections. It starts with the theoretical contributions and managerial implications. The chapter also suggests limitations and insights on further studies, before offering concluding reflections about this PhD journey, the research, its contribution and impact.

CHAPTER 2

FOUNDATIONS OF BRAND ATTACHMENT

2.1 Introduction

Creating strong bonding between consumers and brands is an objective of companies as it will lead to positive outcomes, such as positive word-of-mouth, commitment, loyalty and willingness to pay a price premium (e.g. Orth *et al.*, 2010, Vlachos *et al.*, 2010; Kim *et al.*, 2005). As observed by Grisaffe and Nguyen (2011), companies may harvest financial benefits when enduring emotional attachment to brand is developed, and rewards from emotionally bonded repurchases are less exposed to situations that induce switching. Comprehending how to create or intensify attachments might be the means of achieving successful marketing relationships (Thomson, 2006) since the foundation of strong brand relationships is feelings related to attachment (Fournier, 1998) and brand attachment is a prominent and pivotal driver of brand equity (Park *et al.*, 2010). Recent research reveals that strong attachment towards a brand can act as a buffer to firm's unethical behaviours (Schmalz & Orth, 2012) and increase word-of-mouth (Hudson *et al.*, 2015), among other favourable behaviours.

Judging by the prominent roles that brand attachment plays (e.g. Jang *et al.*, 2015; Hudson *et al.*, 2015), it is crucial for marketing researchers and practitioners to understand how to form stronger attachment between consumers and brands (Brocato *et al.*, 2014). Extant research investigating the antecedents of brand attachment focuses only on the emotional components and neglects the cognitive component (e.g. Dolbec & Chebat, 2013; Malär *et al.*, 2011; Vlachos *et al.*, 2010). Hence, Park *et al.* (2010) suggest that there is a necessity for further research on how to enhance brand attachment, which they conceptualised as comprising consumers' emotions and cognitions. The present study proposes several variables that may be a driver for a stronger brand attachment. This will contribute to the body of literature and offers ways that can be used by managers in building stronger brand attachment.

This chapter provides literature foundations that guide the framework of this study. It starts by discussing the meaning of brand and attachment. The discussion then continues to the literature of brand attachment, which is the main construct of this study. The

conceptualisations of brand attachment is discussed. Distinctions and similarities of brand attachment with other constructs are also discussed. Next, the measurements of brand attachment is presented. At the end of the chapter, a summary is provided, to focus on the emerging key learnings.

2.2 The Meaning of Brand

Before defining attachment in the marketing context, specifically brand attachment, it is important to understand about the meaning and value of brand itself. Today competition in the market is very dynamic. Consumers are bombarded with lots of products and services (Davenport *et al.*, 2011), which may confuse them in choosing. Brands help consumers in choosing within a category. A brand has dimensions that differentiate it in some way from other products designed to satisfy the same need, therefore it is more than a product (Keller, 2008). Farquhar (1989) clearly differentiates a product and a brand by stating that a brand is a name, symbol, design, or mark that enhances the value of a product beyond its functional benefit, while a product is something that offers a functional benefit.

According to the American Marketing Association (AMA, 1995), a brand is “a name, term, sign, symbol, or design, or any other feature that identifies one seller’s good or service as distinct from other sellers.” The definition above suggests that a particular brand can differentiate one product or service from one company from the other companies using name, sign, symbol or combination of them. Another conventional definition of brand comes from Aaker. As reported by Aaker (1991, p.7), “a brand is a distinguishing name and/or symbol (such as a logo, trademark, or package design) intended to identify the goods or services of either one seller or a group of sellers, and to differentiate those goods or services from those of competitors.”

Aaker’s definition of brand has been considered to be a limited definition, displaying the function of a brand at its very basic (Keller & Lehmann, 2006). Additionally, Keller (2008) argues that these definitions are too narrow and brands can have deeper meaning than only to differentiate with competitors. According to Keller and Lehmann (2006), a brand simplifies choice, promises a particular quality level, reduces risk, and engenders trust for its customers. In other words, these authors believe that assigning brand to a product or service serves not only as a differentiation with competitors but it can also add values to that product or service (e.g. awareness, reputation and prominence).

Later, Kapferer (2012) argues that defining brand as a set of mental associations, held by consumer, which add to the perceived value of a product or service has two problems. The first problem is that it leaves out the product itself and focuses on the gain in perceived value brought by the brand. Product and service, in brand management, is the prime vector of perceived value, while communication is there to structure, orient, and add tangible and intangible perceptions. The second problem is that it focuses on cognitions and left out the emotional component. In her seminal work, Fournier (1998) notes the lack of affective components in several important constructs related to branding, such as brand loyalty. Emotional connections have been regarded as pivotal driver to favourable consumers' behaviours (e.g. Thomson *et al.*, 2005; Park *et al.*, 2010). The lack of emotional components has been considered to occur not only in B2C markets, but also in B2B markets (Leek & Christodoulides, 2012).

Definition of brand changes through time since there are on-going processes of development in branding literature and research. The latest definition on brand is:

“A name that symbolizes a long-term engagement, crusade or commitment to a unique set of values, embedded into products, services and behaviours, which make the organization, person or product stand apart or stand out” (Kapferer, 2012, p.12).

The dynamic competitions show that the market is so cluttered nowadays, which makes several options available for consumers in selecting a product category. It is because consumers have the freedom to choose among lots of brands available in the market, firms are now facing a fiercer competition. Big firms such as IBM, Intel, Cisco and Oracle utilise brand development strategies to devise competitive advantage in order to fight commoditisation and increasing lack of differentiation in their respective market (Leek & Christodoulides, 2011). Keller (2008) proposes that a brand is able to give additional perceived value to a product or service. The value added to a product from giving a brand name to the product is now commonly referred to as "brand equity" (Keller & Lehmann, 2006; Aaker, 1991).

Recently, brand equity has been defined as “a set of perceptions, attitudes, knowledge, and behaviours on the part of consumers that results in increased utility and allows a brand to earn greater volume or greater margins than it could without the brand name” (Christodoulides &

de Chernatony, 2010, p.48). These authors note that brand equity signifies the intangible market-based relational asset that emulates bonds between consumers and firms, which provides a vital strategic bridge for marketers (Keller, 2008). It has been argued that a deeper understanding of the consumer-brand relationship is crucial, since the relationships between consumers and brands are an important element of strategic brand management (Fournier, 1998).

Many researchers and practitioners have shown significant interest on brand since brand has larger scope than only its function for a product or service. For instance, consumers use brand for their own purposes to enhance their image, which is known as symbolic consumption (c.f. Ekinci et al., 2013). For consumers, brands are omnipresent in consumers' everyday life (Albert *et al.*, 2008) and they use brands to express, convey, and validate their identity (Swaminathan *et al.*, 2007; Escalas & Bettman, 2005; Aaker, 1999). Brands may also function as resources and perspectives for consumers (Reimann & Aron, 2009). The above arguments represent the importance of creating a strong link (attachment) between the consumers and brands. Brand attachment has been regarded as one of the prominent constructs in the realm of consumer-brand relationship (e.g. Hudson *et al.*, 2015; Fedorikhin *et al.*, 2008). For instance, Park *et al.* (2010) argue that brand attachment is a prominent and pivotal driver of brand equity. Hence, the present research focuses on the construct of brand attachment.

2.3 The Meaning of the Word “Attachment”

Previous discussion has pointed out the definition and importance of brand as well as studying consumer-brand relationship, specifically brand attachment. The discussion above has also discussed the value of studying brand attachment. Before continuing the discussion to brand attachment, it is substantial to get a grasp of what is attachment. The word “attachment”, according to The Oxford English Dictionary, refers to:

1. An extra part or extension that is or may be attached to something to perform a particular function.
2. Affection, fondness, or sympathy for someone or something.
3. Temporary secondment to an organisation.
4. The action of attaching something.

Based on the meanings above, the term 'attachment' being used throughout the study closely matches the first and second description. Attachment is considered as an extension or additional part and affection, fondness or sympathy towards someone or something. Connotation of attachment varies from one discipline to another. This study will start discussing attachment from psychology perspective and then continue discussing it from the marketing perspective.

Attachment has been studied extensively in psychology. Bowlby (1969) pioneered the work on attachment theory in the context of infants and caregiver relationships and since then the theory flourishes. Bowlby (1969) explains that attachment is presented as a system of behaviour with its own form and its own function. He considers attachment as a selective emotional bond that supports closeness and well-being of one for another and the function of attachment is to reduce arousal or anxiety and promote safety and survival. Later, Bowlby (1973) summarises attachment theory in three propositions:

1. If an individual is confident that an attachment figure available, that individual will be much less prone to fear.
2. The confidence that is built up slowly from infancy to adolescence and tend to persist relatively unchanged throughout the rest of life.
3. The varied expectations that an individual develop on accessibility and responsiveness of attachment figures are reflections of the experiences the individual have actually had.

Bowlby (1969) develops attachment theory by studying the relationships between infants and their mothers. Moving from the realm of infant-caregiver relationships, emotional bonds can occur as infants grow and become adult. The desires for creating emotional bonds move from caregivers or parents toward significant others. Emotional bonds can occur among adults in a romantic love (Hazan & Shaver, 1987) and as kinships and friendships in young adulthoods (Trinke & Bartholomew, 1997).

In his view, Bowlby (1969) argues that proximity seeking is what causes a person to develop emotional bonds with an attachment figure. Emotional bonds between individuals can also develop because an individual discovers that another human being is necessary - in order to reduce certain drives, such as the drive for food in the realm of infant-caregiver relationship (Bowlby, 1979). Within adult romantic love (Hazan & Shaver, 1987), attachment includes

positive as well as negative emotions, displaying the needs to fulfil love as social and biological functions of human beings. Hazan and Shaver (1994) add exploration, caregiving, affiliation and sexual mating, which serve unique functions and responds to different environmental cues in the adult attachment system. The development of attachment systems serves basic human needs, which in the end reinforce individual's general well-being (Berman & Sperling, 1994). The basis for the differences is the attachment figure; in infant attachment the attachment figure is usually a parent, whereas in adult attachment the attachment figure can be a peer or a sexual partner (Hazan & Shaver, 1994). Further studies also argue that it is not the drive reduction that acts as the functional goals of attachment systems but the fulfilment of actual or perceived protection and security (Shaver & Mikulincer, 2005; 2002).

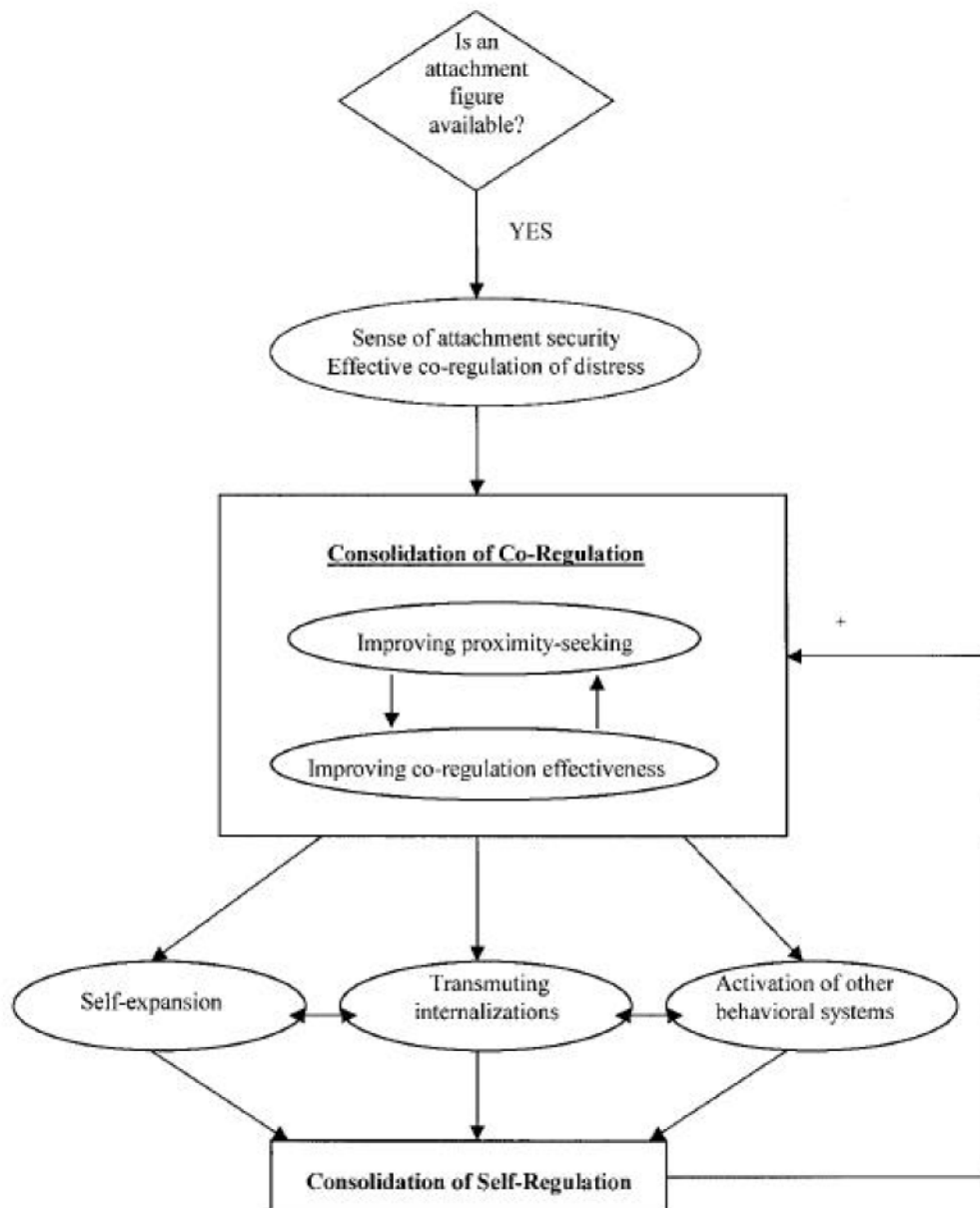
The attachment systems will be automatically activated if there is a potential or actual threat to the sense of security, until a state of protection and security is attained (Shaver & Mikulincer, 2005). There are three basic circumstances of distress that can activate the attachment systems (Davis *et al.*, 2003): (1) existing threat to the individuals, (2) existing threat to relationship between individual and attachment figure, and (3) challenging conditions which require attachment figure as a secure base.

Attachment reflects the process of developing an emotional bond between an individual and significant others which act as the attachment figure (Collins & Reed, 1990). Attachment theory investigates humans' tendency with these particular others to form, maintain and dissolve affectionate ties (Hazan & Shaver, 1994; Bartholomew & Horowitz, 1991). The process of developing this emotional bond can be measured on the basis of anxiety, closeness and dependence (Collins & Read, 1990). Anxiety refers to the condition when individuals anxiously feel that they are not loved or being abandoned. On the other hand, dependence refers to the condition when individuals believe that in times of need they can depend on others. Lastly closeness refers to the condition when individuals feel comfortable with intimacy. Afterwards, Berman and Sperling (1994) identify proximity seeking behaviour, separation distress, sense of safe haven and mourning loss as signs of stronger attachment.

Apart from proximity seeking and safe haven, attachment theory posits that individuals are always looking for a sense of security from an attachment figure. Mikulincer *et al.* (2003) offer a framework that illustrates the development of security-based strategies of affect

regulation, which carries the objective of relieving distress and assisting personal adjustment through productive, flexible, and reality-attuned instruments. Furthermore, security-based strategies will promote self-actualisation and develop autonomy and individuality. They propose that there are two stages of developmental sequence: consolidation of co-regulation and consolidation of self-regulation. Their framework can be seen on Figure 2.1.

Figure 2.1 The Development of Security-based Strategies



Source: Mikulincer *et al.* (2003, p.92)

The development of the security-based strategies appear on Figure 2.1 emphasise on the availability of attachment figure which activates two stages of consolidation. According to

Mikulincer *et al.* (2003), the first stage is broadening and enriching proximity seeking along with improvement in affect regulation by the help of attachment figures which falls under the co-regulation consolidation, while the second stage is connecting co-regulation with self-regulation along with establishing the self as the main executive agency which falls under the self-regulation consolidation.

Mikulincer *et al.* (2003) propose three mechanisms that assist in connecting co-regulation with self-regulation. The three mechanisms are: (1) extends individual's perspectives and capacities, (2) expands the self, and (3) internalises functions that originally accomplished by attachment figures. When individuals feel secure because of the availability of the attachment figure, they start to strengthen their efficacy to handle their own distress. Besides that attachment figure will be considered as a self-extension and individuals will take resources from attachment figure to develop the ability to individually deal with distress. Finally, the ability to handle distress individually is being helped by the process of internalising attachment figure.

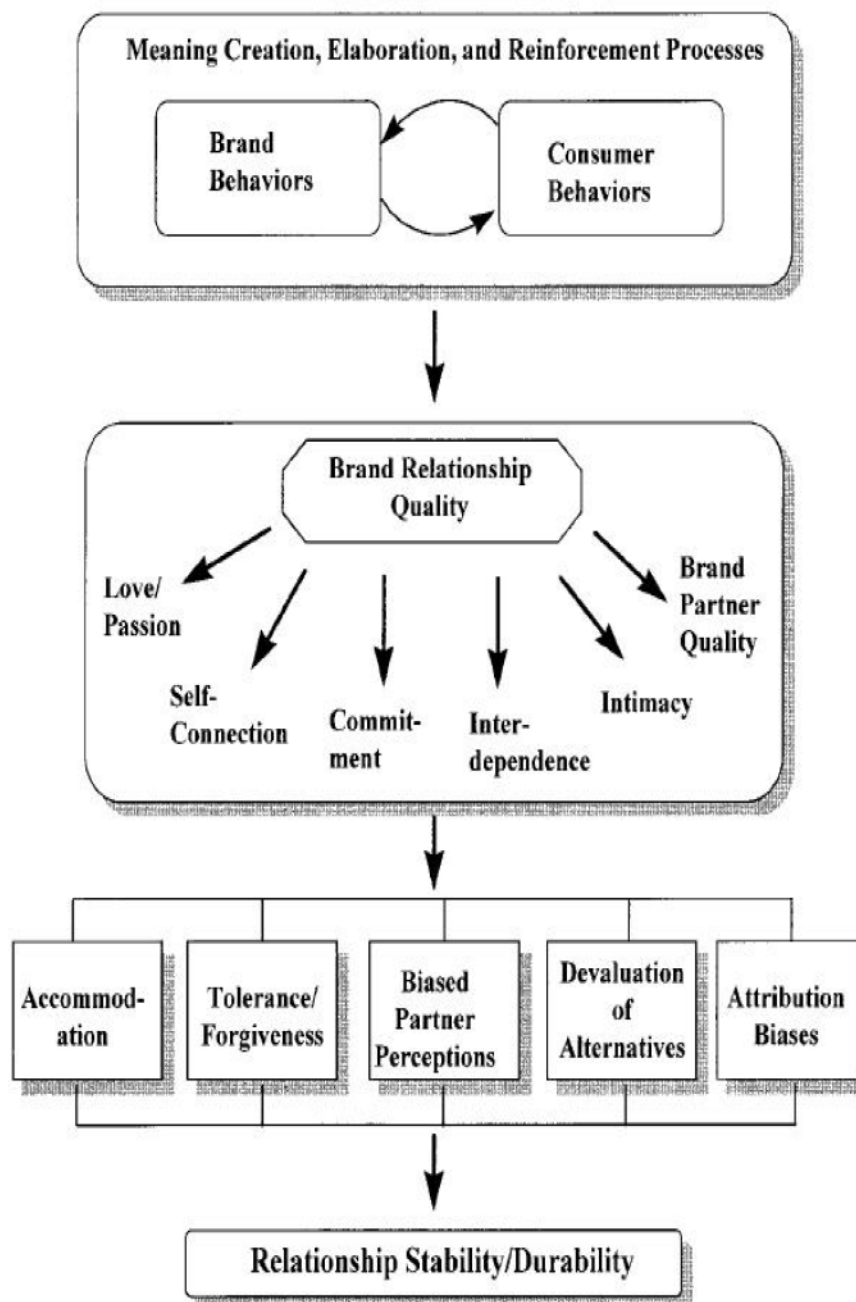
2.4 The Conceptualisations of Brand Attachment

Attachment in psychology describes the emotional bonding between an individual with other significant individuals. It describes interpersonal relationships. Extant research also suggests that consumers can develop attachments beyond interpersonal relationships (person to person) into person to possessions (e.g. Ferraro *et al.*, 2011; Kleine & Baker, 2004; Ball & Tasaki, 1992) and brands (Park *et al.*, 2010; Carroll & Ahuvia, 2006; Fournier, 1998).

Brands can be considered acting as reasonable relationship partners (Fournier, 1998). Increasingly, building consumer-brand relationship becomes a new trend for academics and practitioners. Fournier (1998) argues that comprehending consumer-brand relationships provides an outlook in the marketing study concerning consumers' choice of brands related to their identity. The value of consumer-brand relationship has been well documented in the marketing literature such as: increasing consumer's defensive act against the effect of negative information (Ahluwalia *et al.*, 2001) and minimising the number of consumer desertions (Liljander & Strandvik, 1995). Building consumer-brand relationships is important to the long-term prosperity of brands and plays a role in today's brand success (Veloutsou & Moutinho, 2009).

Fournier (1998) develops brand relationship quality (BRQ) construct to explain consumer-brand relationship stability or durability. She argues that BRQ and brand loyalty try to capture the linkage power of relationship stability of brand and consumer, however BRQ offers affective components in the process of strong brand bonds creation such as: love or passion, self-connection, and personal commitment. Figure 2.2 illustrates Fournier's (1998) BRQ construct.

Figure 2.2 Fournier's BRQ Framework



Source: Fournier (1998, p.366)

Figure 2.2 explains that brand relationship quality dimensions influence relationships stability and durability. Fournier (1998) argues that in keeping relationships, positive feelings alone are not enough. She identifies six dimensions that are important in maintaining a stable and durable relationships: (1) love/passion, (2) self-connection, (3) commitment, (4) interdependence, (5) intimacy, and (6) brand partner quality. These dimensions can be enhanced or diluted through consumer or brand actions.

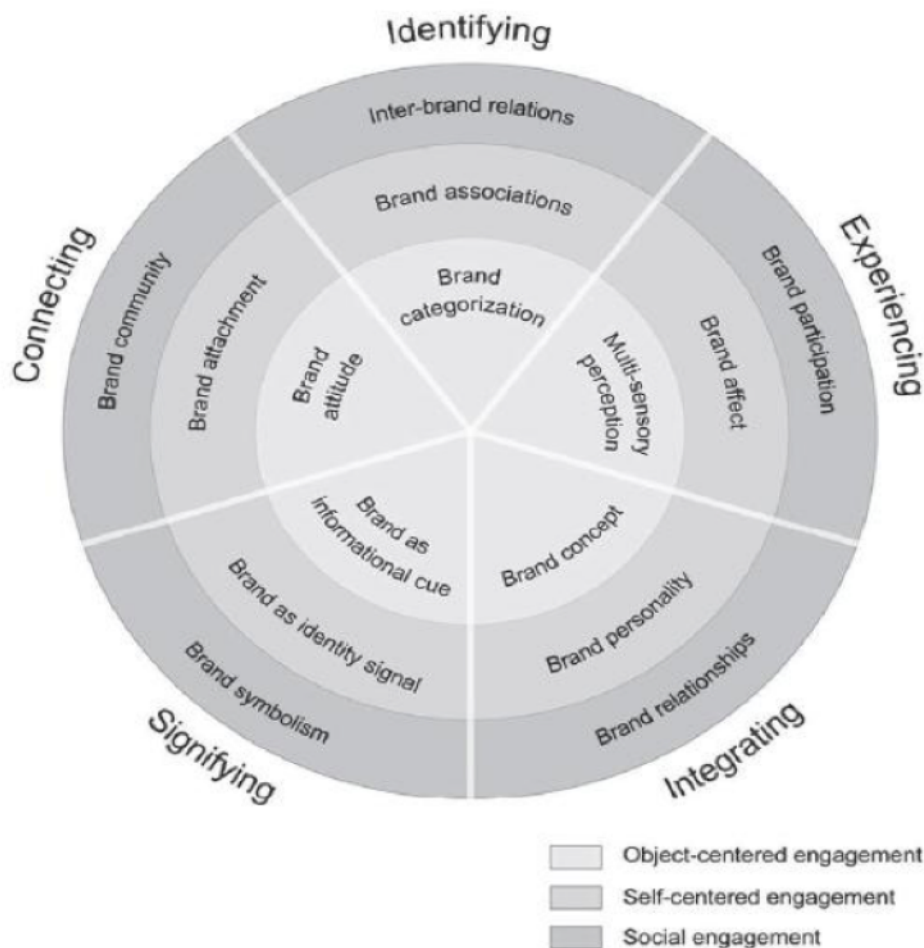
Fournier (1998) also argues that the connection of consumer toward a brand is based on strong affective concept (consists of love and passion as part of the affective attachment) with a condition of emotional dependence involving separation anxiety and it is irreplaceable. However, there is an argument that considers Fournier's argument to be vague and ambiguous. Researchers argue that Fournier sees brands as 'animistic and anthropomorphic' (Avis *et al.*, 2012 p. 312). These authors argue that there is confusion as to whether Fournier's (1998) theory is based on consumers seeing the brand as a humanlike entity or as researchers' metaphors. Recent research (Huang & Mitchell, 2014) proposes that it depends on whether the consumers are able to imagine a relationship with brands or not, since imagination improves perceptions of BRQ.

Later, Escalas and Bettman (2003) note that consumers use brands to meet self-needs, where brands are used to construct the self or to communicate self-concept to others. They argue that when brands are used as self-verification or self-enhancement, a connection between consumer and brand is formed. Individuals always have the inclination to conserve their self-identity (self-consistency) and heighten their self-esteem (self-enhancement). Through these two motives, consumer tends to use or purchase brand that can verify one's self-identity and maintain or enhance one's self-esteem.

In conjunction with BRQ, extant research reveals several constructs of consumer-brand relationships, including brand trust (Chaudhuri & Holbrook, 2001), brand loyalty (Oliver, 1999; Jacoby & Chestnut, 1978), brand love (Batra *et al.*, 2012; Albert *et al.*, 2008; Carroll & Ahuvia, 2006) and brand attachment (Park *et al.*, 2010; Thomson *et al.*, 2005). Recently, brand attachment has received much attention because it is a salient concept in explaining higher level of consumers' behaviour.

Park and MacInnis (2006) identify three levels of consumers' behavioural hierarchy; the bottom of the behaviour reflects brand preference, the second level behaviour reflects brand commitment, and the third level behaviour reflects investment of resources in the brand. In predicting higher-level consumer's behaviour, which reflects commitment to the brand and use of significant resources (time, money, and reputation), brand attachment is more plausible than brand attitude (c.f. Park *et al.*, 2010). This argument is supported by another study (Schmitt, 2012) that identifies brand attachment as one of the salient constructs in consumer psychology. Schmitt (2012) presents a model showing consumer perceptions and judgment, which explains the underlying psychological, constructs and processes of consumer-brand relationships. According to Schmitt, consumers have different needs, motives, and goals, are base assumptions on why consumers have different psychological engagement with brands. Schmitt's model on consumer psychology of brands is shown in Figure 2.3.

Figure 2.3 Schmitt's Consumer Psychology Model of Brands



Source: Schmitt (2012, p.3)

Schmitt (2012) construes the model to represent three layers of engagement levels. The inner layer represents functionally driven engagement – this type of engagement occurs when consumer's goal is to receive utilitarian benefits from the brand. The middle layer represents self-centred engagement – consumer considers the brand to be relevant to them. The outer layer represents social engagement – consumer, with a sense of community, views the brand based on personal and socio-cultural perspective. These layers become more meaningful to consumer as it moves from the inner to the outer layer (Schmitt, 2012). Schmitt categorises brand attachment in the middle layer. This illustrates that brand attachment is more on the consumer's personal side describing the relationship between brand and consumer's self. Additionally, this also supports Park et al.'s (2010) argument that brand attachment is a better indicator of favourable behaviours, compared to brand attitude.

Schmitt's model also distinguishes five brand-related processes, which he notes not to be one-directional and linear: (1) identifying, (2) experiencing, (3) integrating, (4) signalling, and (5) connecting. Consumer identifies, forms associations, and compares the relations between brands falls under the process of identifying. The process of experiencing identifies consumer's sensory, affective, and participatory experiences with the brands. In the integrating process, the consumer combines information to produce an overall brand concept, personality, and relationship with the brand. Signifying process means that the consumer uses the brand as informational cue, identity signal, and cultural symbol. The process of connecting explains when a consumer forms attitude toward the brand, becomes attached to it, and joins the brand community.

According to Schmitt (2012), brand attachment is an essential construct that expresses the way consumers are connected with a brand. Thomson *et al.* (2005) define emotional brand attachment as the bond between a consumer with a specific brand and the bond itself involves feelings toward the brand. One is more likely to maintain proximity towards a brand if one's attachment to the brand is strong and one can feel distress if one experiences real or threatened separation from the brand (Thomson, 2006; Kim *et al.*, 2005). Consumer's emotional attachment, which influences the allocation of emotional, cognitive, and behavioural resources toward a particular brand, induces a state of emotion-laden mental readiness (Park *et al.*, 2006). In sum, these arguments believe that attachment between the brand and the consumer reflects consumer's emotional feelings toward that particular brand.

Afterwards, the definition of brand attachment expanded to not only encapsulates the emotional bond but also the cognitive bond. Attachment is a particular relationship that describes the tendency to approach all relationships from a particular perspective; it is the strength of the cognitive and emotional bond connecting the brand with the self (Fedorikhin *et al.*, 2008). Cognitive bond involves the connection of the self with the brand and emotional bond involves “hot affect” (c.f. Park *et al.*, 2010; Fedorikhin *et al.*, 2008), which promotes desire, satisfaction, frustration, fear, sadness and hope (Park *et al.*, 2006). Emotional feelings such as passion, affection and other feelings are not enough to describe comprehensively the bonding between consumers and brands.

Previous studies (Fedorikhin *et al.*, 2008; Park *et al.*, 2006) include brand-self connectedness in the definition of brand attachment. Connections between self-concept and brands have been discussed previously and self-brand connection emerges as a construct. Self-brand connection refers to the magnitude to which consumers have incorporated a brand into their self-concept (Escalas & Bettman, 2003). Self-brand connection occurs when consumers purchase brands in part to construct their self-concept (Escalas & Bettman, 2005). It is known that brands give meaning to the self. The more closely a set of brand associations is linked to the self, the more meaningful it will become (Escalas & Bettman, 2003) since brand images relate to group affiliation, social status, and prestige (Chaplin & John, 2005).

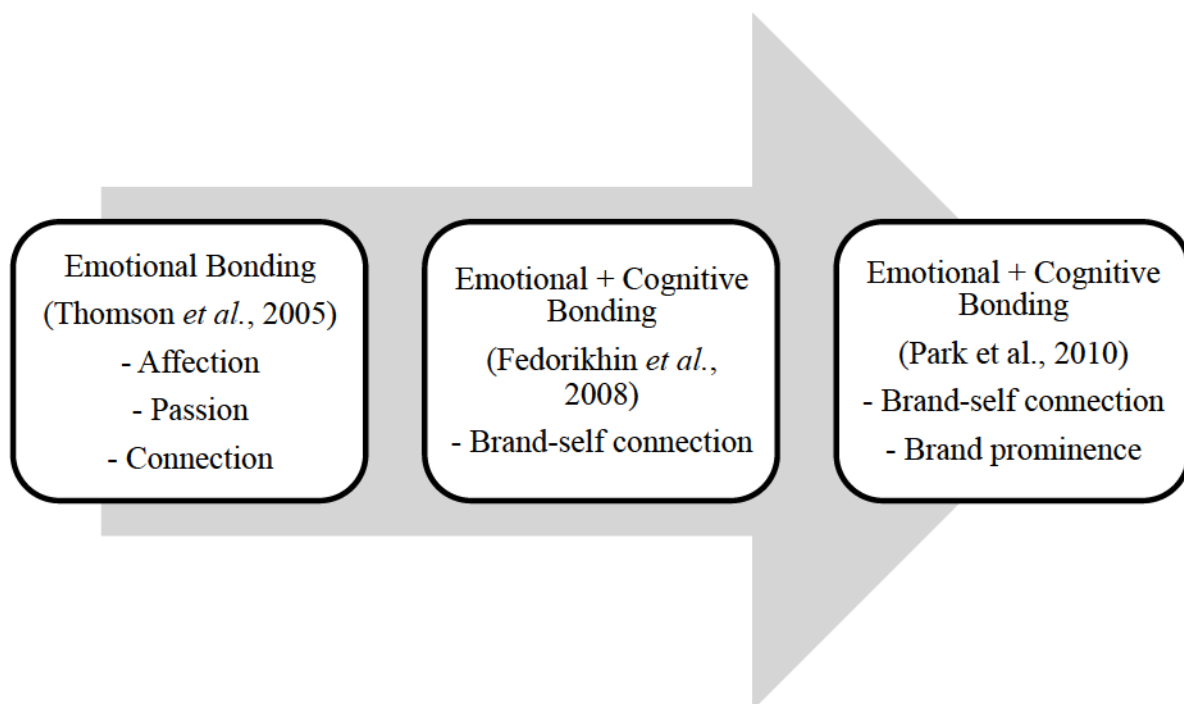
Recent research defines brand attachment as the strength of the bond linking the self with the brand, where heavy and susceptible mental representations that comprise thoughts and feelings about the brand and the relationships between the brand and the self, exemplified the bond (Park *et al.*, 2010). Consumers’ mental representations, apart from other pieces of information, include semantic or abstract representations with the brand (e.g. beliefs, values, characteristics, and subjective norms) and particular experiences with the brand through episodic memories (Sia *et al.*, 1999; Park *et al.*, 2010).

In accordance with this definition, brand-self connection and brand prominence occur as two critical factors that reflect the conceptual properties of brand attachment. Brand-self connection refers to a belief that consumers have about the relevance of a brand for them, which then leads to attachment – the emotion-laden state of mind (Fedorikhin *et al.*, 2008). Considering the brand as part of the self will help consumer to establish cognitive links and

develop a sense of oneness with the brand (Park *et al.*, 2010). Brand-self connection can capture an important part of consumers' construction of self and can measure the extent to which individuals have incorporated brands into their self-concept (Escalas & Bettman, 2003).

Park *et al.* (2010) identify brand prominence as a condition when consumers' possess brand-related thoughts and feelings that have become a part of a person's memory in his or her mind and the perceived fluency of it will vary. They argue that prominence reflects the salience of the cognitive and affective bond that connect the brands to the self, which includes perceived ease and frequency of brands related thoughts and feelings in mind. This means that as the occurrence of a particular brand increases in consumer's mind and heart, the brand becomes more prominent. According to Park *et al.* (2010), the inclusion of prominence as one of the dimensions of brand attachment is for two reasons. First, prominence of feelings and thoughts inhibit recall of other thoughts and feelings will affect behaviour and exert a strong influence on decision-making. Second, instrumental value of prominence, stronger attachment will occur when brand-related thoughts and feelings are more versus less prominent. Figure 2.4 below displays the development of the conceptualisations of brand attachment.

Figure 2.4 The Development of the Conceptualisations of Brand Attachment



Source: The Author

2.5 Similarity and Distinction of Brand Attachment with Other Constructs

The construct of brand attachment is quite similar and sometimes overlapping with other constructs, such as: emotional attachment, brand relationship quality BRQ, self-brand connection (SBC), consumer-brand identification (CBI) and brand love. First is emotional attachment (Thomson *et al.*, 2005). It has been argued that brand attachment encapsulates not only the emotions but also cognitions through the link between the brand and the self (Fedorikhin *et al.*, 2008). BRQ refers to the extent of a consumer's relationship with a brand in regards to its depth, quality and strength (Fournier, 1998). According to Park *et al.* (2010). Brand attachment is different from brand relationship quality because brand attachment does not accommodate types of relationships (e.g. kinships or best friends). Thus, brand attachment is a narrower construct compared to brand relationship quality, since it only measures the strength of the relationship.

Alongside brand-self connection, previous research has used the term self-brand connection. Self-brand connection (SBC) refers to the extent that a brand has been incorporated into consumers' self-concept (Escalas & Bettman, 2003; Escalas, 2004). According to Stokburger-Sauer *et al.* (2012), SBC is different in a way because it communicates one's identity and helps in achieving the desired self. Another construct that shares similarities is CBI. CBI has been defined as a consumer's perceived state of oneness with a brand (Stokburger-Sauer *et al.*, 2012, p. 407). The difference between CBI with brand attachment is the addition of brand prominence. Recently, Park *et al.* (2010) added the notion of brand prominence, the salient of the link between the brand and the self through perceived ease and frequency, to the conceptualisation of brand attachment.

Carroll and Ahuvia (2006, p. 81) define brand love as 'the degree of passionate emotional attachment a satisfied consumer has for a particular trade name'. However, another study (Albert *et al.*, 2008) argues that brand love consists of different dimensions according to the origin of the consumers, except for passion and pleasure. Recent research (Batra *et al.*, 2012) found that brand love is best represented as a higher-order construct. These authors argue that brand love is a multidimensional construct, which includes self-brand integration, passion-driven behaviours, positive emotional connection, long-term relationship, positive overall attitude valence, attitude certainty and confidence (strength), and anticipated separation distress. Hence, brand love is a broader construct. However, in order to achieve love, attachment is fundamental. Table 2.1 below displays the summary of these constructs.

Table 2.1 Some Constructs within the Realm of Consumer-Brand Relationship

Selected Reference	Construct	Definition
Fournier (1998)	Brand relationship quality	The extent of a consumer's relationship with a brand regarding its depth, quality and strength
Escalas & Bettman (2003) Escalas (2004) Escalas & Bettman (2005)	Self-brand connection	The extent that a brand has been incorporated into a consumer's self-concept
Thomson et al. (2005)	Emotional attachment	The bond between a consumer with a specific brand; the bond itself involves feelings towards the brand
Carroll & Ahuvia (2006) Albert <i>et al.</i> (2008) Batra <i>et al.</i> (2012)	Brand love	The degree of passionate emotional attachment a satisfied consumer has for a particular trade name
Fedorikhin <i>et al.</i> (2008) Park et al. (2010)	Brand attachment	The power of the bond linking the self with the brand, where heavy and susceptible mental representation - that comprises thoughts and feelings about the brand and the relationship between the brand and the self - exemplifies the bond
Stokburger-sauer <i>et al.</i> (2012)	Consumer-brand identification	A consumer's perceived state of oneness with a brand

Source: The Author

Table 2.1 above displays the definition of brand attachment together with the constructs that have been considered to be similar. It is important to differentiate the concept of brand attachment from other concepts. High correlations and similarities are the reasons why these concepts should be differentiated (Thomson *et al.*, 2005).

Park *et al.* (2006) note that the basis of brand attachment strength is the willingness to sacrifice personal resources, which can fall into two dimensions: (1) willingness to sacrifice self-image resources for the brand and (2) willingness to sacrifice scarce discretionary resources (money, time, and energy). The greater the consumer's readiness in sacrificing resources means stronger attachment between the brand and the consumer.

Park *et al.* (2006) categorise the strength of attachment into three levels: low, moderate and high. They also categorise two types of resource sacrifice (self-image resources and personal discretionary resources) into three levels from low to high. Their argument on the relationship between brand attachment strength with dimensions of sacrifices and behaviours can be seen in Table 2.2.

Table 2.2 Brand Attachment and Behaviours

Attachment	Types of Resource Sacrifice		Brand Supporting Behaviours
	Self-Image Resources	Personal Discretionary Resources	
Low	Low	Low	None
Moderate	Low	Moderate	Repeat purchase behaviour accompanied with paying a price premium, postponement of purchase or prolonged brand search.
	Moderate	Low	Repeat purchase behaviour accompanied with public display, public defending of a brand or recommendation to others.
	Moderate	Moderate	Repeat purchase behaviour accompanied with participation in the brand community.
High	Low/Moderate	High	Stronger repeat purchase behaviour accompanied with more willingness to pay price premium, postpone of purchase or prolong brand search. Additional brand supporting behaviours: investing in a firm, applying for a job to work, refusal to exchange the attached product for financial gains.
	High	Low/Moderate	Stronger repeat purchase behaviour accompanied with more willingness to display, defend, or recommend a brand to others. Additional brand supporting behaviours: investing in a firm, applying for a job to work, refusal to exchange the attached product for financial gains.
	High	High	Stronger repeat purchase behaviour accompanied with more willingness to participate in the brand community. Additional brand supporting behaviours: investing in a firm, applying for a job to work, refusal to exchange the attached product for financial gains.

Source: Park *et al.* (2006, p.19)

Based on Table 2.2, the strength of attachment can be categorised into three levels: low, moderate, and high. In the condition of low brand attachment strength, consumer's behaviour is predicted more by brand attitude. Whereas, in the condition of moderate level of brand attachment strength, brand attachment not brand attitude plays the role in explaining consumer's behaviour. At the highest level of brand attachment strength, consumer shows greater willingness to sacrifice personal resources and higher behaviour such as forming or joining a brand community.

Brand attachment has been suggested as a different construct from other constructs such as: brand attitude, involvement, satisfaction, and brand loyalty. Although brand attachment and brand loyalty share similarities, it is different from brand loyalty. Fournier (1998) states that brand loyalty neglects the affective components of brand attachment. In a sense, brand loyalty only captures attitudinal and behavioural consumers' responses, whereas brand attachment captures affective and cognitive consumers' responses. So, it is believed that brand attachment is the driver of brand equity, which includes brand loyalty (Kim *et al.*, 2005; Orth *et al.*, 2010; Park, *et al.*, 2010; Thomson, *et al.*, 2005; Vlachos *et al.*, 2010). The thorough discussion about the similarities and differences between brand attachment and other constructs (e.g. brand attitude, involvement, satisfaction, and brand loyalty) will be presented in the sub-chapters below.

2.5.1 Brand Attachment with Brand Attitude

Although brand attachment and brand attitude share similarities in certain aspects, both of them are different constructs. Brand attitude refers to consumers' complete assessments of a brand and it is a function of the prominent attributes and benefits that are associated with the brand (Keller, 1993). Park *et al.* (2010) argue that brand attitude only captures the mind share of consumers, whereas brand attachment captures the share of consumer's mind and the share of consumer's heart. The similarity between brand attachment and brand attitude is that they both capture consumer's share of mind. Both brand attachment and brand attitude are psychological constructs that comprise assessment of strength (Park *et al.*, 2010), however they are different constructs.

The differentiation between brand attachment and brand attitude has been discussed in several papers (see Thomson *et al.*, 2005; Park & MacInnis, 2006; Fedorikhin *et al.*, 2008; Park *et al.*, 2010). In short, several researchers (Thomson *et al.*, 2005; Park & MacInnis, 2006; Fedorikhin *et al.*, 2008; Park *et al.*, 2010) have put their argument about the differences between brand attachment and brand attitude can be covered in eight points, which can be seen in table 2.3 below.

Table 2.3 Differences between Brand Attachment and Brand Attitude

Aspect	Brand Attachment	Brand Attitude
Self-Concept	Close ties	No ties
Nature of Affect	Hot affect	Cold affect
Interactions	Direct contact	Without direct contact
Motivational & Behavioural Implications	Strong	Weak to moderate
Range of Valence	Strong to weak	Positive to negative
Number	Few	Many
Time Dependent	Yes	No
Commitment	High	Low

Source: Adapted from Park *et al.* (2010), Fedorikhin *et al.* (2008), Park & MacInnis (2006) and Thomson *et al.*, 2005

First, the concept of attachment is inherently tied to self-concept while attitudes do not necessarily imply self-relevance. Second, attachment is associated with relatively hot affect while attitudes are associated with cold affect. Third, attachment is based on experiences, on the contrary one does not need to have experiences to have favourable attitude. Fourth, attachment has strong motivational and behavioural implications regarding the target object, while attitudes do not imply such strong motivational or behavioural manifestations. Fifth, the constructs differ in their range of valence. Attitudes range from strong positive to strong negative, while attachments vary in strength from weak to strong. Six, in term of numbers attachment can only happen toward a few numbers, whereas attitude can be toward any number. Seven, attachment is largely time dependent since it develops over a period of time, brand attitude strength need not be. Finally, individuals that are strongly attached rather than having favourable attitude are more committed in maintaining the relationship

2.5.2 Brand Attachment with Involvement

Involvement has been defined as a state of mental readiness to a consumption object, decision or action, which influences the allocation of cognitive resources (Park & Mittal, 1985 as cited in Thomson *et al.*, 2005). Attachment and involvement looks similar but conceptually both of them are different (Ball & Tasaki, 1992). According to them, involvement reflects the relationship between consumer and a product category, and that relationship differs in behaviours and feelings in addition to not including the attainment of meaning and significance of a specific possession or brand. Other than that, the differences between

attachment and involvement have been discussed (see Thomson *et al.*, 2005; Schultz *et al.*, 1989), and the summary is in table 2.4 below.

Table 2.4 Differences between Brand Attachment and Involvement

Aspect	Brand Attachment	Involvement
Association with self-developmental	Direct	Indirect
Temporal orientation	Past, present, future	Present
Consumption phase	Usage	Acquisition
Mental readiness & Resource allocation	High	Low to moderate
Realm	Emotion and Cognition	Cognition

Source: Adapted from Park *et al.* (2010), Fedorikhin *et al.* (2008), Thomson *et al.* (2005), Ball & Tasaki (1992) and Schultz *et al.* (1989)

Schultz *et al.* (1989) identify several accounts that differentiate attachment from involvement. First, fundamental self-developmental processes that span the entire life cycle are directly associated with attachment rather than involvement. Second, attachments deal with memories and previous self-definitional experiences as well as future, whereas involvement concerns the present only. Third, attachment concerns the usage phase of consumption, whereas involvement concerns the acquisition phase of consumption.

Thomson *et al.* (2005) argue that there are two main differences of emotional brand attachment with involvement: (1) mental readiness and resource allocation, and (2) the realms being covered. Since emotional brand attachment usually goes beyond one's voluntary control, it goes beyond mental readiness and resource allocation. Furthermore, in terms of the realm that it covers, emotional brand attachment covers the realm of emotions and involvement covers the realm of cognition. Recent research (Park *et al.*, 2010; Fedorikhin *et al.*, 2008) believes that attachment also covers the realm of cognition.

2.5.3 Brand Attachment with Satisfaction

Consumer satisfaction reflects the overall emotional response of consumers to the whole service experience at the post-purchasing point for a particular transaction (Ekinci *et al.*, 2008). Brand attachment and satisfaction are similar in a way that both of them are based on experiences. In addition, both brand attachment and satisfaction evokes consumer's emotional responses.

Brand attachment and satisfaction are also conceptualised as different constructs. Thomson *et al.* (2005) argue that satisfaction may become the basis of emotional brand attachment because consumer that is emotionally attached with a particular brand is likely to be satisfied with the brand. This means that brand attachment can predict satisfaction. Other than that, differences between brand attachment and satisfaction have been discussed (see Thomson *et al.*, 2005). Table 2.5 below summarises those differences.

Table 2.5 Differences between Brand Attachment and Satisfaction

Aspect	Brand Attachment	Satisfaction
Behavioural manifestations	Available	Unavailable
Occurrence	Over time	Straight away
Evaluative judgment	No	Yes
Range of valence	Strong to weak	Positive to negative

Source: Adapted from Park *et al.* (2010) and Thomson *et al.* (2005)

The differences between emotional brand attachment and satisfaction can be summarised in three points (Thomson *et al.*, 2005). First, emotional brand attachment does imply behavioural manifestations such as proximity maintenance and separation distress, whereas satisfaction does not. Second, emotional brand attachment tend to develop over time, whereas satisfaction can occur straight after consumption. Third, emotional brand attachment is not based on evaluative judgment, whereas satisfaction is.

2.5.4 Brand Attachment with Brand Loyalty

Jacoby and Kyner (1973, p.2) define brand loyalty as “the biased behavioral response expressed over time by some decision-making unit with respect to one or more alternative brands out of a set of such brands, and is a function of psychological processes.” Later, according to Oliver (1999, p.34), brand loyalty refers to “a deeply held commitment to rebuy or repatronize a preferred product/service consistently in the future, thereby causing repetitive same-brand or same brand-set purchasing, despite situational influences and marketing efforts having the potential to cause switching behavior.” Chauduri and Holbrook (2001) identify that brand loyalty consists of two distinct aspects: (1) behavioural loyalty and (2) attitudinal loyalty. Behavioural loyalty, or can be called purchase loyalty, covers consumers’

action of buying the brand repeatedly (repeated patronage). On the other hand, attitudinal loyalty covers consumers' level of commitment to the brand's unique values.

There are currently two schools of thought regarding brand loyalty and brand attachment. The first school (e.g. Delgado-Ballester & Munuera-Aleman, 2001) considers that brand attachment is part of brand loyalty, whereas the second school (e.g. Park *et al.*, 2010; Thomson *et al.*, 2005) considers that brand attachment and brand loyalty are different constructs. Extant research (e.g. Vlachos *et al.*, 2010; Orth *et al.*, 2010) shows brand loyalty as the outcome of brand attachment. According to Yim *et al.* (2008), consumers' commitment and loyalty to a particular brand are linked with the consumers' affectionate ties to that particular brand. Previously, Chaudhuri and Holbrook (2001) has shown that the ability of a brand to bring forth consumers' positive emotional response combine with brand trust predict behavioural and attitudinal loyalty.

Fournier (1998) notes that brand loyalty attempts to seize the power of the link between consumer and brand over time. In this sense, brand attachment and brand loyalty are similar since both of them develop over a period of time. Besides that, consumers can develop attachment and loyalty to a particular brand based on previous experiences. Hence, the present study follows these authors that brand attachment is conceptually distinct from brand loyalty. The differences between brand attachment and brand loyalty can be seen in table 2.6 below.

Table 2.6 Differences between Brand Attachment and Brand Loyalty

Aspect	Brand Attachment	Brand Loyalty
Type of Responses	Affective and Cognitive	Attitudinal and Behavioural
Temporal Orientation	Before	After
Evaluative Judgment	No	Yes

Source: Adapted from Park *et al.* (2010), Thomson *et al.* (2005) and Chaudhuri & Holbrook (2001)

First, the type of responses it develops. Brand attachment is more likely to develop affective and cognitive responses, whereas brand loyalty is more likely to develop attitudinal and behavioural responses. Park *et al.* (2010) note that brand attachment captures consumers' mind and heart share; reflecting affection and cognition. Second, in a continuum, brand attachment comes before brand loyalty. Consumers are likely to develop affective and cognitive responses and then later as the cause of those responses they develop attitudinal and

behavioural responses. Third, brand loyalty is based on evaluative judgment, whereas brand attachment is not based on evaluative judgment.

2.6 Measurements of Brand Attachment

Brand attachment is a prominent concept in marketing literature. A comprehensive understanding on how to measure it is crucial. Kim *et al.* (2005) when measured brand attachment on their research, used measurement adapted from previous literature in psychology (Collins & Read, 1990) and also from marketing (Fournier, 1998). Emotional dependence and separation anxiety came out as dimensions of brand attachment. Kim *et al.* (2005) measure brand attachment on emotional dependence and separation anxiety. Emotional dependence was evaluated on five items such as “I want to associate myself completely with this brand,” and separation anxiety on six items such as “Something is missing when I do not use this brand.”

Bowlby (1980) explains that infants become emotionally attached to their primary caregivers and can be emotionally distressed when separated from them. Individual will be less prone to fear if an attachment figure is available (Bowlby, 1973). This indicates that a person has emotional dependence to their attachment figure. Separation anxiety happens when an attachment figure is taken away. Attachment figure serves as a safe haven and as a secure base (Hazan & Shaver, 1994) and taking the attachment figure will create distress and anxiousness.

On his research in the context of human brands, Thomson (2006) used measurement that has been developed previously in the psychology literature for the measurement of brand attachment (Berman & Sperling, 1994; Hazan & Shaver, 1994; Hazan & Zeifman, 1994). Thomson (2006) use separation distress as an indicator that attachment exists. It is evaluated on four items, such as “I feel better if I am not away from or without XYZ for long periods of time.” Separation distress is a natural condition accompanying attachment (Bowlby, 1980). It is the data, which ascertain the existence and regulator role of the attachment behavioural system (Hazan & Zeifman, 1994). Individuals can reveal the condition of distress when they experience loss of an attachment figure (Berman & Sperling, 1994).

A lack of scale to measure consumers’ attachment to brands will create hard and challenging efforts for both practitioners and researchers to evaluate the strength of the relationship

between consumers and brands (Thomson *et al.*, 2005). The scale to measure brand attachment that both Thomson (2006) and Kim *et al.* (2005) use in their study is adapted from psychological study. Thomson (2006) use separating distress to measure attachment strength, whereas Kim *et al.* (2005) use emotional distress and separation anxiety to measure brand attachment. These scales, being used by Thomson (2006) and Kim *et al.* (2005), are developed in the psychology literature to measure individuals' feelings toward other individuals (interpersonal relationships). Although individuals may also develop feelings for brands, it is critical to create a specific scale to measure individuals' level of attachment with brands (Thomson *et al.*, 2005).

In order to fill the lack of scale in measuring the strength of consumers' brand attachment, Thomson *et al.* (2005) develop a reliable and valid multi-item measure of emotional brand attachment. They propose emotional brand attachment consists of three emotional components: affection, passion and connection. The dimension of affection consists of four indicators: affectionate, loved, peaceful and friendly. Passion consists of three indicators: passionate, delighted, and captivated. Connection consists of three indicators: attached, bonded, and connected.

Alongside, the conceptualisation of brand attachment move from only capturing consumers' emotions to the brands (Thomson *et al.*, 2005) to capturing consumers' emotions and cognitions connecting the brand with the self (Fedorikhin *et al.*, 2008; Park *et al.*, 2006). The connection between brand and the self has been discussed in much research (Escalas, 2004; Escalas & Bettman, 2005, 2003; Moore & Homer, 2008). A scale to measure self-brand connection has also been developed. Escalas and Bettman (2003) use a scale developed by Escalas (1996 as cited in Escalas & Bettman, 2003) to measure self-brand connection in an unpublished dissertation. Self-brand connection is measured based on the average of seven 7-point scale items, anchored with 1 (not at all) and 7 (extremely well). The seven items measuring self-brand connection can be seen in Table 2.7 below.

Table 2.7 Escalas' Self-Brand Connection Scale Items

Brand X reflects who I am.
I can identify with Brand X.
I feel a personal connection to Brand X.
I (can) use Brand X to communicate who I am to other people.
I think Brand X (could) help(s) me become the type of person I want to be.
I consider Brand X to be “me” (it reflects who I consider myself to be or the way what I want to present myself to others).
Brand X suits me well.

Source: Escalas and Bettman (2003; 2005) and Escalas (2004)

This scale is also used by several studies, such as: Escalas and Bettman (2005), Moore and Homer (2008). Escalas (2004) discusses the development of the self-brand connection scale. The scale itself is adapted from Sivadas and Machleit (1994 as cited in Sivadas & Venkatesh, 1995). The difference between the two scales is in their context; Sivadas and Machleit scale is in the scope of possessions, whereas Escalas scale is in the scope of brand. Escalas (2004) also shows the convergent, nomological, and discriminant validity of the self-brand connection scale. Fedorikhin *et al.* (2008), in their second study, employ emotional bond and brand-self connection to measure consumer's attachment to brand. They manipulate brand-self connection by asking the respondents to select a brand, from their own list of brands, with the following instruction: “with which you feel a close emotional connection, a brand that reflects you well, and gives you a feeling that it is almost part of yourself or an extension of yourself.”

Afterwards, Park *et al.* (2010) develop their own measurement of brand attachment. They identify that Thomson *et al.*'s (2005) scale of brand attachment only focus purely on emotions. Their arguments on developing another scale to measure brand attachment are: (1) a specific set of positive feelings is not enough to explain brand attachment, other set of feelings from brand-self memories may also be part of attachment, (2) using “passion” to represent attachment may not fully capture all relationships characterised by strong attachment, and (3) attachment includes brand-self cognitions, thoughts, and autobiographical brand memories not just emotions.

Two dimensions (brand-self connection and brand prominence) appeared as the dimensions of brand attachment (Park *et al.*, 2010). The measurement demonstrates convergent and discriminant validity. Both brand-self connection and brand prominence consist of two items. The items for brand-self connection are as follows: (1) “To what extent is [Brand Name] part

of you and who you are?” and (2) “To what extent do you feel that you are personally connected to [Brand Name]?” For brand prominence, the items are as follows: (1) “To what extent are your thoughts and feelings toward [Brand Name] often automatic, coming to mind seemingly on their own?” and (2) “To what extent do your thoughts and feelings toward [Brand Name] come to you naturally and instantly?” Different measurement of brand attachment has been used in several studies. The summary of brand attachment measurement that has been used in previous marketing research can be seen in table 2.8 below.

Table 2.8 Measurement of Brand Attachment in Previous Research

No.	Selected Reference	Scale Used	Dimensions	Items and Rating Scales Used
1.	Escalas & Bettman (2003)	Escalas (1996, in Escalas & Bettman, 2003)	Unidimensional	7 items and &7-point scale items
2.	Escalas (2004)	Own, similar to Escalas & Bettman (2003)	Unidimensional	7 items and &7-point scale items
3.	Escalas & Bettman (2005)	Escalas & Bettman (2003)	Unidimensional	7 items and &7-point scale items
4.	Kim <i>et al.</i> (2005)	Collins & Read (1990) and Fournier (1998)	2 dimensions - Emotional dependence - Separation anxiety	7 items and 7-point Likert-type scale
5.	Thomson <i>et al.</i> (2005)	Own	3 dimensions - Affection - Connection - Passion	10 items and 7-point Likert-type scale
6.	Thomson (2006)	Hazan & Shaver (1994) and Hazan & Zeifman (1994)	Unidimensional	4 items and 7-point Likert-type scale
7.	Carroll & Ahuvia (2006)	Own	Unidimensional	10 items and 5-point Likert-type scale
8.	Moore & Homer (2008)	Escalas (2004)	Unidimensional	7 items and &7-point scale items
9.	Vlachos <i>et al.</i> (2010)	Ball & Tasaki (1992), Sivadas & Venkatesh (1995), and Carroll & Ahuvia (2006)	Unidimensional	11 items and 9-point Likert-type scale
10.	Orth <i>et al.</i> (2010)	Thomson <i>et al.</i> (2005)	3 dimensions - Affection - Connection - Passion	10 items and 7-point Likert-type scale
11.	Park <i>et al.</i> (2010)	Own	2 dimensions - Brand-self connection - Brand prominence	4 items and 11-point Likert-type scale
12.	Malär <i>et al.</i> (2011)	Thomson <i>et al.</i> (2005)	3 dimensions - Affection - Connection - Passion	6 items and 5-point Likert-type scale

Source: The Author

As can be seen on Table 2.8 above, the first three references work on the self-brand connection (SBC) scale, which has been considered to share similarities with brand-self connection scale (Park *et al.*, 2010). Another study that used SBC scale is a study by Moore and Homer (2008). For references number 4 and 6, the scales being used were derived from psychology literature. Only reference number 5 used a scale that was particularly developed to measure brand attachment. References number 9 to 12 used this emotional brand attachment scale developed by Thomson *et al.* (2005).

2.7 Chapter Summary

Brand has been notified as one of the most important intangible assets that a company has. The function of brand has moved from only acting as a tool to differentiate with other competitors (Aaker, 1991) to provide cues for perceived values (Keller, 2008). Brands have been ubiquitous in consumers' daily life (Albert *et al.*, 2008), which function as resources and perspectives (Reimann & Aron, 2009) and is used to express, convey, and validate identity (Aaker, 1999; Escalas & Bettman, 2005; Swaminathan *et al.*, 2007). Not only companies, but also consumers signify the importance of brands. Companies use brands to differentiate with competitors and convey values (Keller & Lehmann, 2006), on the other hand consumers use brands to express their identity (Ekinci *et al.*, 2013).

Based on the function of brands as a symbol for consumers' identity, it is crucial to understand the relationships between consumers and brands, as Fournier (1998) notes that these relationships are fundamental for strategic brand management. Veloutsou and Moutinho (2009) argue that creating strong relationships between consumers and brands may contribute to the long-term prosperity of brands. Several constructs appear from consumer-brand relationships (CBR), such as: brand trust, brand commitment, brand loyalty, brand attachment, brand love and so forth.

It has been discussed that brand attachment is different from other CBR constructs, such as: brand attitude, brand loyalty, and so forth. Brand attitude grasp consumer's mind, while brand attachment grasp both consumer's mind and heart. The present study also argues that brand loyalty captures behavioural and attitudinal responses, while brand attachment captures affective and cognitive responses. Fournier (1998) notes that brand loyalty is missing the affective components compare to brand attachment. Just as research (e.g. Thomson *et al.*, 2005) indicates that brand attachment is the driver of brand loyalty.

Bowlby has conceptualised attachment in psychology literature since 1969. The basis of attachment theory is the bonding between a person and significant other or an attachment figure. Shaver and Mikulincer (2005) identify that the fulfilment of protection and security is the goal attachment system. Several researchers have proposed that people can have connection with brands (Fournier, 1998; Thomson *et al.*, 2005; Park *et al.*, 2010), which implies that brand can act as an attachment figure.

Brand attachment, has recently gained attention and importance among researchers and practitioners. For instance, Park and MacInnis (2006) argue that brand attachment is an important concept in explaining higher level of consumer behaviours, including putting investment such as time, money and reputation. According to Park *et al.* (2010), brand attachment is a pivotal driver of brand equity. Even in order to achieve consumers' love towards brands, attachment is fundamental (Batra *et al.*, 2012). Recent research (Brocato *et al.*, 2014) notes that enhancing attachment between firms and consumers is the foundation of relationship marketing strategy. B2B sector also acknowledges the importance of attachment. Leek and Christodoulides (2012) argue that emotional qualities help the buyer, in the context of B2B, making decision. These arguments have indicated the importance of attachment. However, little is known on how a firm can develop strong emotional ties between the consumers and the brand (Brocato *et al.*, 2014).

Limited studies have started to answer the above question. For example, Orth *et al.* (2010), Vlachos *et al.* (2010), Grisaffe and Nguyen (2011), Kim *et al.* (2005), Thomson (2006), and Malär *et al.* (2011) have tried to propose factors that will positively influence brand attachment. However, it is still far from adequate since their study measures only emotional brand attachment. Most of these studies used Thomson *et al.*'s (2005) scale to measure emotional brand attachment (affection, passion and connection). Meanwhile, Park *et al.*'s (2010) conception of brand attachment adds cognitions apart from emotions, which reflect brand-self connection and brand prominence. The conceptualisation of brand attachment has moved and now includes emotional and cognitive bonding. No study has proposed the antecedents of brand attachment, which accommodate not only emotional bonding but cognitive bonding as well. The present study answers Park *et al.* (2010) calling for further research to find factors that can create stronger brand attachment that covers brand-self connection and brand prominence.

CHAPTER 3

ANTECEDENTS AND CONSEQUENCES OF BRAND ATTACHMENT

3.1 Introduction

The importance of brand attachment with its unique strong effects to positive outcomes has been discussed in Chapter 2. Yet despite its importance and managerial implications, research on how to form a stronger brand attachment is still lacking (Brocato *et al.*, 2014). It is crucial to study the factors that can enhance brand attachment, as stated by Park *et al.* (2010), additional research is needed to understand how to form and enhance brand attachment which includes brand-self connection and brand prominence.

Limited research has been undertaken to study the factors that influence the formation of brand attachment. For example, Thomson (2006) proposes the fulfilment of three basic psychological needs (autonomy, relatedness, and competence) in predicting attachment strength. Two studies, Malär *et al.* (2011) and Kim *et al.* (2005), propose that congruity between the self and brand personality positively influence brand attachment. Furthermore, Vlachos *et al.* (2010) identify that gratifying, enriching and enabling-the-self affect brand attachment. Next, Orth *et al.* (2010) note that creating a positive affective environment will the creation of stronger attachment. Later, Grisaffe and Nguyen (2011) postulates five antecedents of emotional brand attachment, superior marketing characteristics, traditional customer outcome states, unique user-derived benefits, socialisation forces, and sentimentality/emotional memory.

However, these studies use different measurement of brand attachment and some of them use measurement adapted from psychology literature and others used measurement that only captures emotions. Thomson *et al.* (2005) argue that it will be hard and challenging for both practitioners and researchers to judge the strength of the relationship between consumers and brands without appropriate scale to measure consumers' attachment to brands. Later, Park *et al.* (2010) create a scale to measure brand attachment, whose conceptualisation has been expanded to include emotions and cognitions represented by brand-self connection and brand prominence. They also call for further research to find out how marketers can enhance brand

attachment using the measurement.

Answering to that calling from Park *et al.* (2010), the present study proposes several antecedents of brand attachment based on attachment theory and self-concept theory, such as: self-congruence, brand experience, and brand responsiveness. As has been discussed, brand attachment has been conceptualised as brand-self connection and brand prominence (Park *et al.*, 2010), which is based on self-concept. In addition, brand attachment has been categorised as a type of self-extension (Kleine & Baker, 2004). Moreover, just like Malär *et al.*'s (2011) argument that these antecedents may be different in terms of their effects on brand attachment for particular consumer's predispositions and characteristics, the present study will also propose attachment style as a moderating variable.

Several studies have shown various positive outcomes of brand attachment, such as: explaining higher level of consumer's behaviours (Park & MacInnis, 2006), influencing commitment, loyalty, positive word-of-mouth, willingness to pay price premium, minimise switching and maximise defensive act against negative information (e.g. Orth *et al.*, 2010; Vlachos *et al.*, 2010). Hence, this study relates brand attachment to the key consequence in marketing: brand loyalty.

This chapter starts with research on brand attachment within the marketing literature. Then, the discussion moves to a review of literature on the antecedents. It examines the concepts of self-congruence, brand experience, and brand responsiveness while also discussing each concept relationships with consumer behaviour. In addition, the questions on how do these variables relate to brand attachment and why these variables fit as the antecedents of brand attachment will be discussed. Discussion on how attachment style as the moderating variable that may affect the strength of the attachment, is also presented. This chapter will also present the reasons for choosing attachment style as the moderating variable that can affect the relationship of brand attachment with its antecedents and outcome. Additionally, this chapter shows different outcomes as a result of stronger brand attachment.

3.2 Brand Attachment in Marketing

Limited studies have conducted research into understanding how to develop strong attachment towards a brand. Kim *et al.* (2005) start by proposing that brand personality and self-concept congruity are important determinants of brand attachment. Their findings

support that there is a positive effect on brand attachment of congruity between brand personality and self-concept. Thomson (2006) uses self-determination theory to answer the question of why consumers develop strong attachment in the context of human brands. The findings of his research shows that when a human brand enhances individual's feelings of autonomy and relatedness, while not suppressing feelings of competence, it is more likely for that individual to form a strong attachment.

Both Thomson (2006) and Kim *et al.* (2005) have a focus on the determinants of brand attachment. Despite researching the determinants of brand attachment, both of these studies do not use measurement that is specifically developed for brand attachment. Kim *et al.* (2005) and Thomson (2006) use measurements which exist in the psychology literature (e.g. separation distress) to measure consumers' attachment strength. Without a dedicated scale to measure consumers' attachment to brands, it will be hard and challenging for both practitioners and researchers to judge the strength of the relationship between consumers and brands (Thomson *et al.*, 2005).

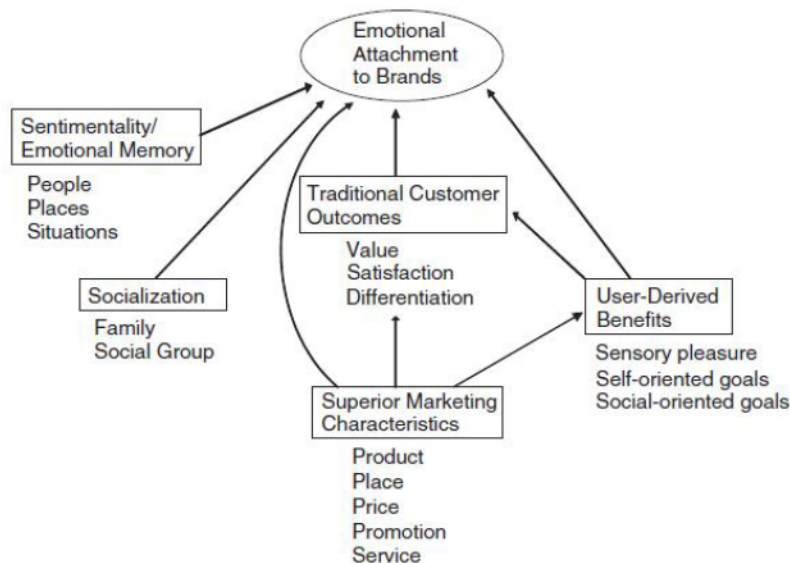
Thomson *et al.* (2005) are the first to develop a scale dedicated to measure the strength of consumers' emotional attachments to brands. A stream of research uses Thomson *et al.*'s scale to answer 'How do managers build consumers' emotional attachment to brands?' A study in the retailing context (Vlachos *et al.*, 2010) proposes that three pillars of self determine the consumer-firm emotional attachment: gratifying-the-self, enabling-the-self and enriching-the-self. These authors argue that shopping enjoyment and interpersonal likeability (consumers and employees) are the dimensions of gratifying-the-self, trust (towards employees and the firm) and place dependence are the dimensions of enabling-the-self, and place identity and self-expression are the dimensions of enriching-the-self. The findings support that those three pillars have positive effects on consumer-firm emotional attachment and that particular attachment will have positive effects on loyalty and positive word of mouth.

Also in a retailing context, a study proposes that positive store-evoked affect will create a stronger emotional attachment (Orth *et al.*, 2010). They also address consumer personality such as extraversion, openness, agreeableness, conscientiousness and neuroticism. The findings support that attachment is stronger in positive affective environments. Consumer's attachment will be stronger for consumers that score high on extraversion, openness,

agreeableness and conscientiousness. On the contrary, it will be weaker for consumers that score high on neuroticism. Orth *et al.* (2010) note that emotional attachment affects brand loyalty and willingness to pay a price premium.

A qualitative study by Grisaffe and Nguyen (2011) investigates the antecedents of emotional brand attachment. Using the elicitation task as their method, they postulate five antecedents of emotional brand attachment. Superior marketing characteristics, traditional customer outcome states, unique user-derived benefits, socialisation forces and sentimentality/emotional memory, come out as the antecedents. They follow Thomson *et al.*'s (2005) conceptualisation of brand attachment, which reflects the level of consumer's passion, affection and connection toward the brand. Figure 3.1 is Grisaffe and Nguyen's model of building emotional brand attachment.

Figure 3.1 Antecedents of Emotional Attachments to Brands



Source: Grisaffe and Nguyen (2011, p.1053)

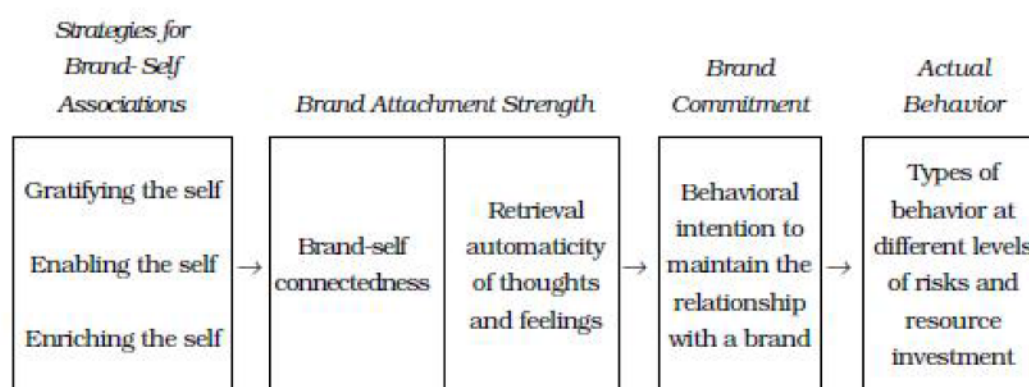
Figure 3.1 shows that in building emotional brand attachment, there are factors that are controllable and also less controllable. On the left side, both factors are less controllable, whereas on the middle, both factors are controllable. Marketers are able to use marketing tools directly to influence emotional brand attachment or indirectly through positive outcomes, which at the end will influence emotional brand attachment. But marketers may be unable to use marketing tools to influence consumer's memory or sentimentality, as well as consumer's social life. One factor on the right side offers mixed controllability. Marketers

can use marketing tools to influence user-derived benefits, which is also one of the determinants of emotional brand attachment. Despite proposing the antecedents, Grisaffe and Nguyen (2011) feel that measuring and modelling their findings is needed.

Recently, a study (Malär *et al.*, 2011) proposes that congruity in self-concept (actual or ideal) with brand personality is the antecedent of emotional brand attachment. Their findings show that both actual and ideal self-congruence positively influence brand attachment, but actual self-congruence has a greater impact. Furthermore, product involvement, self-esteem, and public self-consciousness decrease the positive impact of ideal self-congruence, but increase the impact of actual self-congruence on emotional brand attachment.

However, the conceptualisation of brand attachment is developing and these four studies (Vlachos *et al.*, 2010; Orth *et al.*, 2010; Grisaffe & Nguyen, 2011; Malär *et al.*, 2011) used Thomson *et al.*'s conceptualisation of brand attachment that only includes emotional bonding. Park *et al.* (2006) argue that attachment should include both emotional and cognitive bonding. Brand-self connection appears from their conceptualisation. These authors propose three pillars that are believed to determine the strength of brand attachment. These three pillars are (1) gratifying the self, (2) enriching the self, and (3) enabling the self. Not only its antecedents, they also show the consequences of stronger brand attachment in their model. Park *et al.*'s (2006) model for creating brand attachment strength can be seen on Figure 3.2.

Figure 3.2 Conceptual Model on Brand Attachment Strength



Source: Park *et al.* (2006, p.8)

According to Figure 3.2, when a particular brand helps consumers to gratify, enrich and enable the self, a connection between the brand and the self may happen. Brand helps gratify

the self when the brand pleases and comforts the self, enrich the self when the brand supports self-expression, and enable the self when the brand provides a sense of efficacy (Park *et al.*, 2008). Brand-self connection is the indicator of the strength level of brand attachment. Furthermore, brand attachment will lead to brand commitment and influence consumer's actual behaviour. Park *et al.* (2008, 2006) suggest building brand attachment through a social psychology route. They argue that consumer's strong attachment with a brand is a product of consumer's self-motivation to gratify, enrich and enable the self. Park *et al.* (2008, 2006) have delineated what causes attachment, based on the literature and previous research, but they do not test the model.

Research by Fedorikhin *et al.*, 2008 shows that when consumers develop attachment with the parent brand, they are more willing to purchase and pay more for any brand extensions. In their first study, they employ an emotional brand attachment scale developed by Thomson *et al.* (2005). Their first study shows that attachment has a strong effect on consumers' purchase intentions and willingness to pay. In their second study, they employ brand-self connection as brand attachment measurement. Attachment is shown to predict beyond purchase intentions and willingness to pay, by predicting not only that but also forgiving mishaps and positive word-of-mouth.

The construct of brand-self connection is similar to previous research on the consumer-brand relationship that concentrates on the construct: self-brand connection. A study incorporating brand into the self-concept (Chaplin & John, 2005) shows that the development of self-brand connection starts from middle childhood (7-8 years old) and early adolescence (12-13 years old), then as the age increases, self-brand connection also increases. In middle childhood, the relationship between self and the brands comes from buying or owning a branded item; as they move to adolescence, the relationship comes from sharing similar personality, user characteristics or reference group affiliation.

Escalas and Bettman (2003) indicate that consumers are more likely to develop self-brand connection when strong relationships between reference group, brand, and consumers' self-concept exist. They use consumers' motivation on self-enhancement and self-verification as explanation. Escalas (2004) continues the study by identifying that viewing advertisements, organised it into a narrative rather than in a vignette order, can produce higher self-brand

connection. Furthermore, she demonstrates that brand attachment as indicated by self-brand connection will lead to superior attitudes toward the brand and greater likelihood of purchase.

Later, Escalas and Bettman (2005) show images that are consistent with the image of an in-group, compared to brands with images that are inconsistent with the image of an in-group, will yield higher self-brand connection. They also show that brands with images that are consistent with the image of an out-group, compared to brands with images that are inconsistent with an out-group, will yield lower self-brand connection. Additionally, they indicate that self-construal (independent vs. interdependent) plays a role in determining the level of self-brand connection. For independent consumers rather than interdependent consumers, out-group brand associations are found to have a greater negative effect on self-brand connection.

Escalas and Bettman (2005) also reveal that brand symbolism has a moderating effect of image congruency. Brands that communicate something symbolic produce stronger effects of image congruency, which will exhibit higher level of self-brand connection, rather than brands that do not communicate something symbolic. In order to distinguish oneself with an out-group, one is likely to utilise symbolic brands rather than non-symbolic brands. Recent research into the self-brand connection (Moore & Homer, 2008) expands the construct beyond tangible consumer products and focus on attitudes towards branded sports organisations. Self-brand connection positively influences brand attitude and produces higher levels of attitude strength (Moore & Homer, 2008). However, their research shows that stronger self-brand connection is found within female respondents than male respondents. Together with these results, they also show that consumers will display greater self-brand connection towards products that match their own gender.

In summary, self-brand connection represents a bonding between consumers and brands. The bonding itself starts from middle childhood and as age increases the strength of the bonding increases as well. However, a person starts to have deeper connection with the brand by sharing oneself when s/he is in their early adolescence. This research reveals consumers' self-motivation, narratives and reference group to be salient factors that determine the strength of the consumer-brand bonding. Evidence shows that higher self-brand connection occurs as the result of congruency between the image of the brand and the image of an in-group. It is also known that stronger bonding between the brands and the self will yield preferable consumers'

behaviour, such as superior brand attitude, high level of attitude strength, purchase intentions, and so forth.

Reimann *et al.* (2012) explore the motivational-emotional aspect related to close brand relationships using self-expansion theory, to explain the general emotional significance behind it. Rapid self-expansion and inclusion into the self are the basis of close consumer-brand relationships. Their study shows that consumers demonstrate rapid self-expansion by exhibiting higher emotional arousal to a newly formed close brand relationship, rather than an established close relationship or neutral relationship. On the contrary, consumers show greater levels of self-inclusion for established brand relationships, rather than a newly formed brand relationships.

Despite researchers striving to study the antecedents and consequences of brand attachment, further research is still needed. First, the three studies above (Malär *et al.*, 2011; Orth *et al.*, 2010; Vlachos *et al.*, 2010) use the emotional brand attachment measurement developed by Thomson *et al.* (2005). Park *et al.* (2006, 2008) argue that brand attachment reflects not only emotions, but cognitions as well. The connections between self-concept with the brand should be put into consideration. In addition, Park *et al.* (2010) argue that the instrumental value of prominence is also a dimension of brand attachment. Second, an integrative study on variables that can be proposed as antecedents of brand attachment should be conducted and a model can be proposed. Third, consumers' heterogeneity should also be put into consideration. The study by Orth *et al.* (2010) accounts for differences in human personality, but there are other variables that can account for consumer heterogeneity. Recent research in marketing (Thomson and Johnson, 2006; Paulssen, 2009; Swaminathan *et al.*, 2009; Mende & Bolton, 2011) has considered attachment style to be a prominent concept in explaining consumer differences.

3.3 Antecedents of Brand Attachment

Informed by two theories (attachment theory and self-concept theory) and previous research, this study proposes three key antecedents of brand attachment. These three constructs are self-congruence, brand experience and brand responsiveness. A discussion of each of these variables is now presented.

3.3.1 Definition of Self-Concept

Park *et al.* (2006) argue that the conceptualisation of brand attachment does not only accommodate emotions but also accommodate cognitions. Their argument is that the power of the cognitive and emotional link connecting the self with the brand reflects brand attachment. The present study proposes that in order to understand how to create a stronger brand attachment it is prominent to comprehend the self, beginning with self-concept.

What is self-concept? According to Epstein (1973, p.407), self-concept is a:

“Self-theory, it is a theory that the individual has unwittingly constructed about himself as an experiencing, functioning individual, and it is part of a broader theory which he holds with respect to his entire range of significant experience.”

Self-theory is a tool to optimise the balance between pleasure and pain within individual over a period of lifetime, to maintain self-esteem, and to manage experience effectively (Epstein, 1973). The term self-concept has also been defined as “the totality of the individual’s thoughts and feelings having reference himself as an object” (Rosenberg, 1979, p.7). It is perceptions and subjective thoughts of a person but not the objective thoughts (Mehta, 1999).

Other researchers identify self-concept as a set of self-schemas in social domains that help providing individual expertise (Markus *et al.*, 1985). Self-schemas are defined as cognitive abstractions concerning the self that arrange and direct the processing of self-related information incorporated within the individual’s social experiences (Markus, 1977). Individuals possess particular self-schemas that lead to different attitudes and behaviours relevant to those schemas toward objects (Markus, 1983). The self-schemas help individuals make sense of themselves in their environment by organising incoming self-related information (Markus, 1977). Evoked self-schema will then influence the value or meaning placed on product and its image attributes (Sirgy, 1982).

In short, the notion of self-concept is about subjectivity in feelings and thoughts, treating the ‘self’ as the centre of attention. Self-concept can also be considered as a collection of self-schemas. These self-schemas will help individuals arrange the self-related information from previous social experiences which they stored in their mind and then later on use it as a guide for their behaviours and attitudes. Besides that, individuals use self-concept as a foundation

to understand other people thoughts, feelings, and behaviours (Markus *et al.*, 1985).

Self-concept is being conceptualised as having several components, actual-self, ideal-self, and social-self (Sirgy, 1982) with several self-concept motives, self-esteem (or self enhancement) self-consistency, and social consistency (Sirgy, 1982; Swann *et al.*, 1987). Actual-self refers to a condition when individuals see who they really are, ideal-self refers to a condition when individuals see who they would like to be in the future, and social-self refers to a condition when individuals present him/her 'self' to the others (Sirgy, 1982).

According to self-consistency theory, people are used to thinking and behaving accordingly to their self-concept in order to preserve their 'self' (Swann *et al.*, 1987) and consistently behave accordingly their 'self-view' (Sirgy, 1982). Self-enhancement theory posits that when people want to be treated in a positive manner by others (Swann *et al.*, 1987), they are more likely to enhance their 'self-view' by seeking experiences (Sirgy, 1982). Social consistency motive explains that people feel comfortable if they act consistently with how they believe others see their 'self-view' (Sirgy *et al.*, 2000).

Individuals use the two motives, self-consistency and self-enhancement, as the basis of their self-concept. When a person in a particular situation wants to activate their ideal-self, then he/she exhibits self-enhancement motive. For example, a woman wants to be considered as a good and caring housewife and mother by others, therefore she will be motivated to enhance herself until she reaches her ideal-self. The same goes for actual-self and social-self but different motives, self-consistency for actual-self and social-consistency for social-self.

3.3.2 Self-Congruence and Consumer Behaviour

Self-concept has relations to consumer behaviour. Individuals are more likely to purchase products that fit their self-concept since products can be a medium for individuals to express themselves (Belk, 1988). The fit between consumer's self-concept and the product's image influence the attitude that consumer's show toward a product (Sirgy, 1982). Sirgy identifies that the fit between the consumers' self and the product's image refers to self-congruence. If consumer's personality with the brand's personality is congruent rather than incongruent, the consumer's preference should increase (Aaker, 1999). Hence, consumers prefer to purchase brands that have high congruity with their self-concept.

There are several forms of self-congruence: actual self-congruence, ideal self-congruence, and social self-congruence (Sirgy, 1982). Actual self-congruence refers to the fit between the actual self and the product/brand's image or personality, ideal self-congruence refers to the perceived fit of the ideal self and the product/brand's image or personality, whereas social self-congruence refers to the fit between social self and the product/brand's image or personality (Aaker, 1999; Sirgy, 1982).

The self-concept motives, self-consistency, self-enhancement and social consistency, explains the relationship between self-congruity with consumer's behaviour. In a retail setting, consumers are more comfortable to see themselves visiting a store that reflect their true self in order to protect their actual-self (Sirgy *et al.*, 2000). Self-consistency motive play a role in explaining this phenomenon. Sirgy *et al.* (2000) also show that consumers prefer to visit store that has an image consistent with their ideal-self because it will make them feel good about themselves. This phenomenon can be explained by the self-enhancement or self-esteem motive. Meanwhile, consumers tend not to visit store if they believe that by visiting the store will be the opposite of what they want others to think about themselves (Sirgy *et al.*, 2000). Social consistency motive explains this phenomenon.

Self-congruence, whether it is actual self-congruence, ideal self-congruence, or social self-congruence, influences consumer's behaviour. Consumers prefer and intend to use or purchase brands if there is congruity between their self-concept and the brand's image (Hong & Zinkhan, 1995). Consumer with motivations to enhance him or her 'self' to approach the ideal image, will buy or use products or brands which possess image that is congruent to their ideal-self (Sirgy, 1982).

Following the importance of congruity between the self and the brand, the present study proposes self-congruence as one of the antecedents of brand attachment. The argument is that consumers will not have a bonding with a brand that does not reflect their selves. On the contrary, if the congruity between the brand and the self is high, it is more likely that the bond between consumer and the brand will be stronger. Besides that, as has been mentioned above, Park *et al.* (2006) conceptualise brand attachment as the bond between the brand and the self. Thus, self-congruence is proposed as one of the factors that will determine the strength of brand attachment.

3.3.3 Experience and Brand Experience

According to Park *et al.* (2010), brand attachment refers to the power of the bond linking the self with the brand, where mental representations exemplified the bond. These mental representations include particular experiences with the brand through episodic memories (Sia *et al.*, 1999; Park *et al.*, 2010). Hazan and Shaver (1994) indicate that familiarity is fundamental for attachment. Consumers become familiar with a brand because of their experiences with the brand. Alba and Hutchinson (1987) note that brand familiarity is the collection of direct and indirect experiences with the brand. Therefore, experience may act as one of the determinant of brand attachment.

Hoch (2002, p.448) defines experience “as the act of living through and observation of events and also refers to training and the subsequent knowledge and skill acquired.” Other researchers (e.g. Braunsberger & Munch, 1998) define experience as displaying a relatively high degree of familiarity with a certain subject area, which is obtained through some type of exposure. The nature of experience allows it to occur directly and indirectly (Brakus *et al.*, 2009). They argue that consumers have direct experiences, when consumers search, shop, receive service, and consume them. On the other hand, when consumers are exposed to advertising and marketing communications, experience occurs indirectly.

Experiences can be divided into several categories, such as: product experiences, shopping and services experiences, consumption experiences and brand experiences (Brakus *et al.*, 2009). When consumers interact (searching, examining, and evaluating) with products, product experiences occur (Brakus *et al.*, 2009; Hoch, 2002). Hoch (2002) proposes that product experience is seductive, for these reasons:

1. “Experience is vivid”, product experience is more engaging.
2. “Experience is seen as less partisan”, product experience is free from self-interested motives that seek ways for marketing the product.
3. “Experience is pseudodiagnostic”, consumers are able to use their personal interests to interpret the product experience itself.
4. “Experience is endogenous”, it concedes consumers to modify and change product experience according to their tastes.

The centre of the product experience is the interaction between consumers and the products, whereas in shopping and service experience the interaction is with people, place, and policies. Store shopping experience occurs when consumers interact with the store's physical surroundings, the store's employees, the store's policies and practices (Kerin *et al.*, 1992). Service experience refers to consumers' feelings throughout service encounter (Hui & Bateson, 1991), which can include cognitive, affective, and behavioural reactions and involves active construction of personally relevant meanings (Padgett & Allen, 1997).

Experiences can occur during and after the actual consumption and usage of the products, such as visiting museums, river rafting, baseball and skydiving (Brakus *et al.*, 2009). These experiences include hedonic goals. Hedonic dimensions, such as: a flow of fantasies, feelings, and fun, are part of the consumption experience (Holbrook & Hirschman, 1982). Not only that, experiences can also occur directly or indirectly (Brakus *et al.*, 2009). Consumer has direct experiences when they shop, purchase and buy, whereas consumer has indirect experiences when they are exposed to marketing communications.

Brakus *et al.* (2009) argue that utilitarian product attributes and category experiences have been the main focus of research on experience neglecting the experiences provided by brands. They define brand experience as subjective, internal and behavioural consumer responses such as sensations, feelings, and cognitions created by brand-related stimuli; as having four dimensions, sensory, affective, intellectual and behavioural. These brand-related stimuli can range from a brand's design and identity, packaging and marketing communications.

3.3.4 Brand Experience and Consumer Behaviour

Brand experience has been presented to have impact on consumer behaviour in miscellaneous ways. Several streams of research on brand experience, explore how this concept plays a salient role in predicting consumer behaviour. In retail settings, Kerin *et al.* (1992) show that experience is relatively more important than quality or price perceptions, which will influence consumer's patronage decisions, satisfaction with store visits, and purchase intentions.

Several studies have documented that brand experience has been found to positively affect consumer satisfaction (e.g. Brakus *et al.*, 2009; Ha & Perks, 2005), trust (e.g. Ha & Perks,

2005) and loyalty (e.g. Brakus *et al.*, 2009) directly. Not only direct effects, research also documented indirect effects of brand experience in predicting consumer behaviours. A research has found that brand experience can positively affect satisfaction and loyalty indirectly through brand personality (Brakus *et al.*, 2009).

Consumers are more likely to be familiar with brand that has been available for a long time and which reputations are reinforced through communications and brand experience (Pae *et al.*, 2002). Familiarity with the brand has positive effect on the perceived quality (Mieres *et al.*, 2006), can influence multiple cognitive factors (Alba & Hutchinson, 1987), and reduce competitive interference (Kent & Allen, 1994). The accumulation of brand-related experiences plays a significant role in consumer's perceptions toward local and foreign-sourced advertisements (Pae *et al.*, 2002).

Different consumer groups will prefer different experiential appeals; consumers are looking for brands that can provide them with unique and memorable experiences (Zarantonello & Schmitt, 2010). They find that brand experience scale can be used to profile consumers into five experiential types: hedonistic, action-oriented, holistic, inner directed, and utilitarian and that this experiential type moderates the relationship between brand attitude and purchase intention.

Although extant research has shown several consequences of brand experience, it has left out the construct of brand attachment. Based on the discussion above, it is known that experiences with the brand may be an important determinant of brand attachment. Brakus *et al.* (2009) mention that over time experiences with the brand may result in emotional attachment. They identify brand experiences producing concrete behavioural responses as well as feelings, sensations, and cognitions. Thus, the present study proposes brand experience as one of the drivers of brand attachment.

3.3.5 Brand Responsiveness

Besides familiarity, Hazan and Shaver (1994) also state that responsiveness is the foundation of attachment. According to them, both familiarity and responsiveness will determine the selection of an attachment figure in forming a bond. Not only that, several studies in psychology (e.g. La Guardia *et al.*, 2000) show that the responsiveness of an attachment

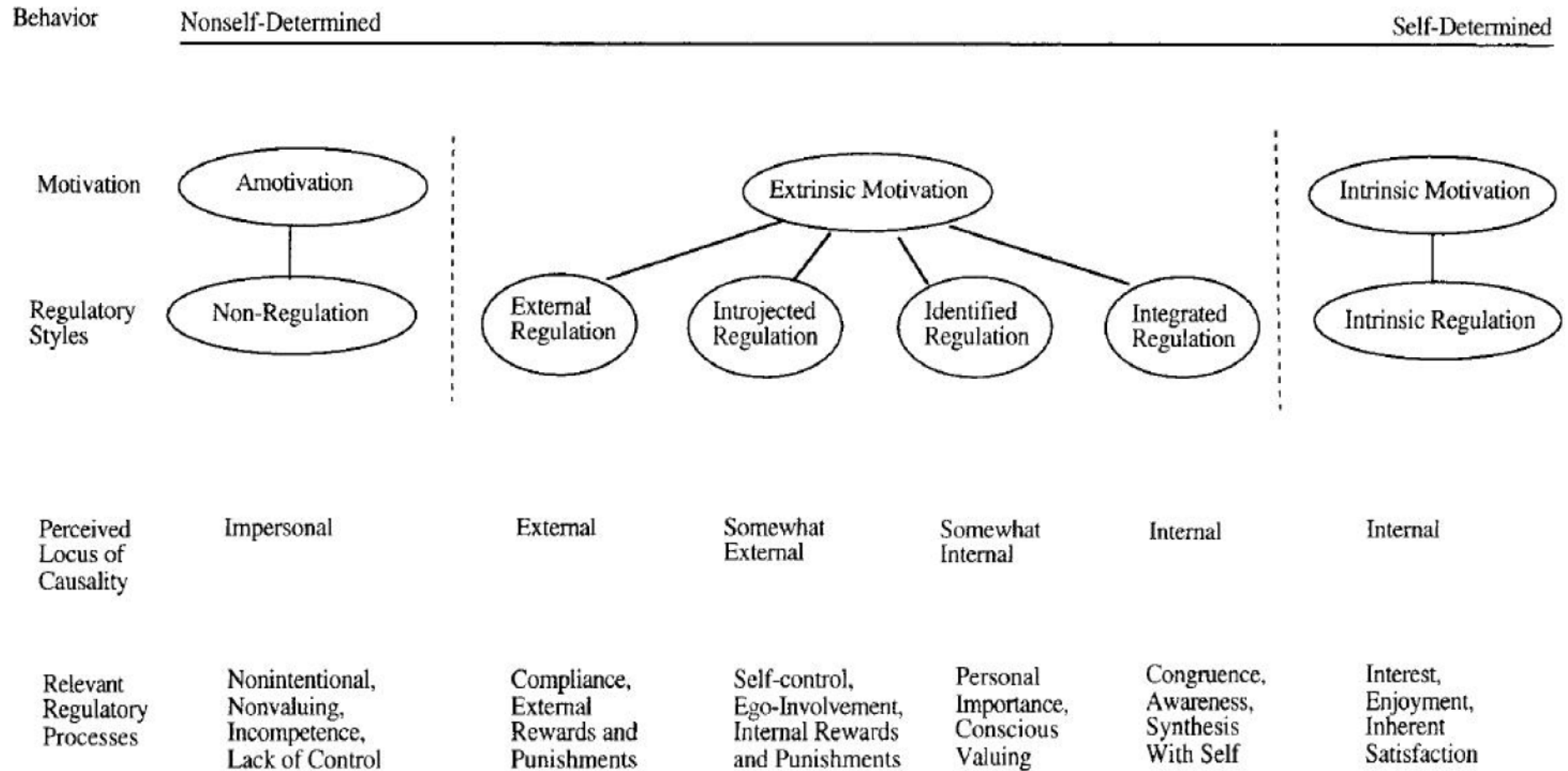
figure will determine the internal working model of individuals which will act as a guide for future or further relationships. For that reason, it is possible that brand responsiveness may affect brand attachment.

How can a brand be responsive? The self-determination theory offers insights into what it means for brands to be responsive. Brands can be responsive if they can fulfil the three basic psychological needs: autonomy, relatedness and competence (Deci & Ryan, 2000; La Guardia & Patrick, 2008; Thomson, 2006). Accordingly, brand responsiveness can be defined as the ability of a brand to fulfil consumer's needs of autonomy, relatedness, and competence. These three basic psychological needs are fundamental considering that inability to captivate these will halt the development and even the continuation of oneself (Ryan & Deci, 2000). In short, when a brand is able to respond in fulfilling these need satisfactions, that brand will play a prominent role in the consumer's life.

Self-determination theory (SDT) concerns are on the foundation of individual self-motivation, personality integration, and conditions that promote positive processes in relation to individual's inherent growth tendencies and innate psychological needs (Ryan & Deci, 2000). Deci and Ryan (2000, p.227) argue that "SDT differentiates the content of goals or outcomes and the regulatory processes through which the outcomes are pursued, making predictions for different contents and for different processes." SDT is focused on the particular nature of positive developmental tendencies and social environments that are hostile toward these positive developmental tendencies (Ryan & Deci, 2000).

Furthermore, SDT deals with motivations for behaviour. These motivational dispositions or orientations are being organised to the extent of which behaviour is characterised as being autonomous versus controlled (Deci & Ryan, 2000). Individuals, in the area of romantic relationships, may have differences in their motivations to conserve a relationship and in their motivations to engage in a relationship (Gaine & La Guardia, 2009). SDT defines an individual's motivational orientation toward behaviours along a continuum (Deci & Ryan, 2000). Ryan and Deci's (2000) SDT continuum is shown in Figure 3.3.

Figure 3.3 The Self-Determination Theory Continuum



Source: Ryan & Deci (2000, p.72)

Figure 3.3 shows that there are three categories of motivation, *amotivation*, *extrinsic motivation*, and *intrinsic motivation*. For extrinsic motivation, there are four regulatory styles, external regulation, introjected regulation, identified regulation, and integrated regulation. Intrinsic motivation refers to carrying activities on the basis of the pleasure or interest in the activity itself, it demonstrates the highest degree of autonomy (Gagne & La Guardia, 2009), whereas, extrinsic motivation refers to carrying activities on the basis of achieving some separable outcome (Ryan & Deci, 2000). On the contrary, amotivation is a condition in which individuals are lacking in motivation or intention to carry out activities (Deci & Ryan, 2000).

SDT differentiates the types of regulation in extrinsic motivation based on whether the regulation is highly autonomous or not (Ryan & Deci, 2000). In the external regulation, behaviours are the least autonomous and perform to satisfy external demand or reward contingency. With the introjected regulation, behaviours are performed to avoid guilt, anxiety, or to attain ego enhancements. On the contrary, with identified regulation, behaviours are performed because they are personally important. In addition, integrated regulation behaviours are performed because they are assimilated to the 'self'.

Even though the basis of SDT is autonomy, it is important to note that in SDT the concept of autonomy refers to volition but not to independence or individualism. Individual is said to be autonomous when that individual's actions experiences choice, willingness and personal endorsement (Deci *et al.*, 2006). Research on the role of motivation in relationships, according to the SDT perspective, follows two main approaches (La Guardia & Patrick, 2008): (1) Approach that focuses on how relational partners support or undermine the fulfilment of the basic psychological needs, and (2) Approach that focuses on how to maintain or transform motivational orientations toward relationships or relational activities.

According to the SDT, there are three basic psychological needs that determine growth and development. Autonomy, competence, and relatedness are these three basic psychological needs (Deci & Ryan, 2000; Ryan & Deci, 2000). Previous research has acknowledged that brands can be responsive if they can fulfil the need for autonomy, relatedness and competence (Deci & Ryan, 2000; La Guardia & Patrick, 2008; Thomson, 2006). Hence, the current study will focus on the concept of fulfilment of basic psychological needs.

Deci and Ryan (2000) propose that the fulfilment of the three basic psychological needs, autonomy, relatedness and competence, qualifies as responsiveness. La Guardia and Patrick (2008) believe that a partner that responds in ways that satisfied the three basic psychological needs is a responsive partner. Thomson (2006) proposes that the fulfilment of autonomy, relatedness, and competence can be classified as brand responsiveness. In other words, a brand is considered to be responsive, if a brand can satisfy the need of autonomy, relatedness and without supressing competence.

Autonomy refers to the needs of individuals to feel self-chosen, self-governed, and self-endorsed in doing their activities (Deci & Ryan, 2000; Ryan & Deci, 2000). The opposite is the feelings of compelled or controlled behaviour, which can be called heteronomy (La Guardia & Patrick, 2008). Autonomy is a salient aspect of healthy human functions because it concerns the experience of integration and freedom (Deci & Ryan, 2000). When the need for autonomy is satisfied, a person is likely to report feelings of volition, agency and initiative (La Guardia *et al.*, 2000). The autonomy orientation, with respect to the initiation and regulation of one's own behaviour, involves a high degree of experienced choice that will move people to seek out opportunities for self-determination and choice (Deci & Ryan, 1985).

Relatedness refers to the needs of individuals to feel a sense of belongingness, connectedness and closeness with others (Deci & Ryan, 2000; Ryan & Deci, 2000). La Guardia and Patrick (2008) note that the key focus of most conventional relational theories is how one achieves relatedness. When the need of relatedness is satisfied, a person is likely to report feelings of being cared for by and connected with another (La Guardia *et al.*, 2000).

Competence refers to the needs of individuals to experience effectiveness, challenge and achievement in one's activity (Deci & Ryan, 2000). Individuals are more likely to carry out activities that can provide them with a sense of efficacy or mastery (Ryan & Deci, 2000). When the need of competence is satisfied, a person is likely to report feelings of curiosity and being skilled (La Guardia *et al.*, 2000).

The three basic psychological needs (autonomy, relatedness, and competence) are substantial for the process of internalisation and for the process of producing variability in intrinsic motivation (Ryan & Deci, 2000). These authors argue that when a person is intrinsically motivated to do certain activities, his or her sense of interest, enjoyment and inherent

satisfaction will be relevant in the regulatory processes. La Guardia & Patrick (2008) also identify that the presence of support for autonomy, relatedness, and competence are essential in the relational context for well-being as well as dynamic functioning.

3.3.6 Brand Responsiveness and Consumer Behaviour

The basic needs for autonomy, relatedness, and competence must be satisfied to achieve an on-going sense of integrity and well-being (Ryan & Deci, 2000). Deci and Ryan (2000) note that the variation in need satisfaction will directly influence the variation in well-being and psychological health. Autonomy, relatedness and competence provide insights into the meaning for a partner to be responsive and highlight these components salience in predicting relational outcomes (La Guardia & Patrick, 2008).

The fulfilment of the three basic psychological needs (autonomy, relatedness, and competence) on predicting well-being and behavioural quality in psychology has been well documented. In relationships that promote basic psychological needs, attachment security is found to achieve a higher level (La Guardia *et al.*, 2000). Fulfilment of autonomy, relatedness, and competence are found to positively influence satisfaction and commitment as well as perceiving less conflict and less defensive responsive to conflict (Patrick *et al.*, 2007). Need satisfaction (autonomy, relatedness, and competence) is found to be associated with more favourable outcomes, such as positive affect and vitality (Reis *et al.*, 2000). Level of autonomy in relationships is found to be related with attachment style, positive relationship is found between autonomy and secure attachment style and negative relationship is found between autonomy and insecure attachment style (Leak & Cooney, 2001).

Another study shows the importance of autonomy support. Autonomy support refers to a condition when relational partner is acknowledging a person perspective by providing choice, encouraging self-initiation, and being responsive (Deci *et al.*, 2006). In the study, autonomy support predicted the individual's experiences of need satisfaction and emotional reliance, attachment security, dyadic adjustment, and inclusion of friend in his/her 'self'. Furthermore, the relationship of receiving autonomy support and need satisfaction remain significant after controlling the dyad level.

In the realm of marketing, Thomson (2006) shows that the fulfilment of the three basic psychological needs (autonomy, relatedness, and competence) by human brands will determine the attachment strength between consumers and brands. Contrary to the research in psychology (e.g., Patrick *et al.*, 2007; La Guardia *et al.*, 2000), there is limited research in marketing that show the importance of fulfilling these three basic psychological needs in predicting attachment strength (e.g. Thomson, 2006).

Responsiveness is fundamental for attachment and it has been discussed that brand responsiveness refers to the ability of the brand to fulfil three basic psychological needs (autonomy, relatedness, and competence). Having a sense of autonomy, relatedness, and not suppressing competence has been shown to positively influence attachment strength (Thomson, 2006). Furthermore, research has also documented that promoting autonomy, relatedness, and competence will lead to higher attachment security (La Guardia *et al.*, 2000). Thus, the present study proposed brand responsiveness as one of the drivers of brand attachment.

3.4 Moderating Variable: Attachment Style

The moderating variable being proposed in the present study is attachment style. Shaver and Mikulincer (2005) define attachment style as resulting from previous attachment experiences, which consist of a systematic pattern of relational expectations, emotions, and behaviours within a person. Each person has different attachment style and differences in attachment style will result in different characteristics in the attachment process. In personal relationships that have been developed over time and based on prior experiences, attachment style captures an individual's emotional and behavioural tendencies (Collins & Read, 1990).

On the basis of several observations in the realm of infant-caregiver relationships, attachment style can be distinguished into three distinct patterns called secure, anxious/ambivalent, and avoidant (Ainsworth *et al.*, 1978). Based on the psychological study of strange situation, infants with secure attachment style seek proximity and are readily comforted when distressed as well as welcoming their caregiver's return after separation. Infants with an anxious/ambivalent attachment style show doubtful behaviour toward caregivers and are not ready to be comforted on reunion, whereas infants with avoidant attachment style show behaviours that refrain proximity or interaction with the caregivers on reunion.

Following Ainsworth *et al.*'s (1978) of infants' attachment style, Hazan and Shaver (1987) argue that the three types of attachment style (secure, anxious/ambivalent, and avoidant) also represent adults' attachment style within romantic love relationships. Their descriptions of the three adult patterns from Ainsworth *et al.* (1978) within adult relationships were worded as seen in Table 3.1.

Table 3.1 Hazan and Shaver's Adult Attachment Types

Secure	I find it relatively easy to get close to others and am comfortable depending on them and having them depend on me. I don't often worry about being abandoned or about someone getting too close to me.
Avoidant	I am somewhat uncomfortable being close to others; I find it difficult to trust them completely, difficult to allow myself to depend on them. I am nervous when anyone gets too close, and often, love partners want me to be more intimate than I feel comfortable being.
Anxious/Ambivalent	I find that others are reluctant to get as close as I would like. I often worry that my partner doesn't really love me or won't want to stay with me. I want to merge completely with another person, and this desire sometimes scares people away.

Source: Hazan and Shaver (1987, p.515)

Table 3.1 shows a single-item measure from Hazan and Shaver (1987) of the three types of attachment style. Their assumption is that the beliefs about the romantic love relationships are illuminated possibly by not a fully aware working model and by underlying working model. Moreover, attachment history influences an individual's attachment style in an adult romantic relationship.

Deriving from working models of self and working models of others, Bartholomew (1990) conceptualise adult attachment style. Positive or negative model of self means whether the self as worthy of love and support or not, whereas positive or negative model of other means whether other people are trustworthy and available or unreliable and rejecting (Bartholomew & Horowitz, 1991). Based on these arguments, four patterns or styles of adult attachment appear: secure, preoccupied, dismissing, and fearful (Bartholomew, 1990; Bartholomew & Horowitz, 1991). Bartholomew and Horowitz's (1991) model of adult attachment can be seen in Figure 3.4

Figure 3.4 Bartholomew and Horowitz's Model of Adult Attachment

		MODEL OF SELF (Dependence)	
		Positive (Low)	Negative (High)
MODEL OF OTHER (Avoidance)	Positive (Low)	CELL I SECURE Comfortable with intimacy and autonomy	CELL II PREOCCUPIED Preoccupied with relationships
	Negative (High)	CELL IV DISMISSING Dismissing of intimacy Counter-dependent	CELL III FEARFUL Fearful of intimacy Socially avoidant

Source: Bartholomew and Horowitz (1991, p.227)

Figure 3.4 explains the classification of attachment style based on two levels of self-image (positive vs. negative) and two levels of image of other (positive vs. negative). Bartholomew and Horowitz (1991) divide the model into four cells. Cell I refers to secure individuals, the 'self' displays worthiness or lovability with belief that others are generally accepting and responsive. Cell II refers to preoccupied individuals, the 'self' displays unworthiness or unlovability with positive beliefs on others. Cell III refers to fearful individuals, the 'self' displays unworthiness or unlovability with beliefs that others are untrustworthy and rejecting. Cell IV refers to dismissing individuals, the 'self' displays worthiness or lovability with negative beliefs towards others.

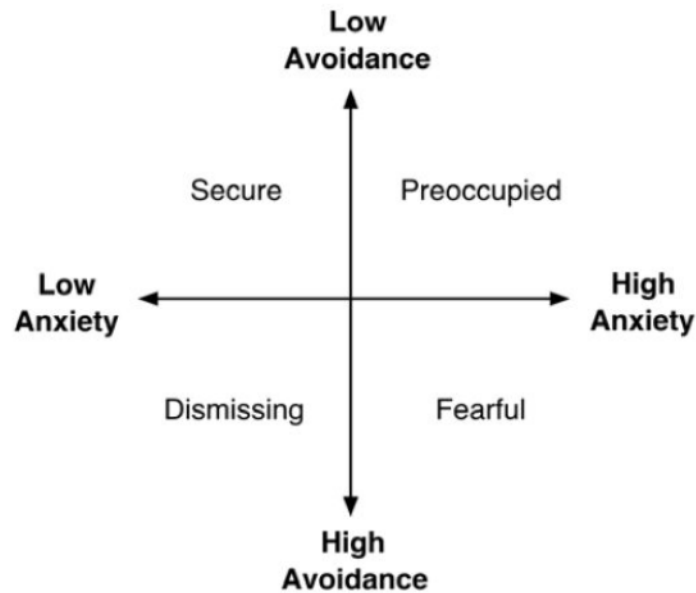
Bartholomew (1990) explains each person characteristics for the four attachment styles. Individuals with secure attachment style are comfortable with closeness and intimacy and relatively confident in their relationship partners' availability and acceptance of them, whereas individuals with preoccupied attachment style are extremely eager to establish closeness and intimacy, but having doubts about the availability of their relationship partners. Furthermore, individuals with dismissing attachment style are uncomfortable with physical and psychological intimacy, and unconcerned about abandonment. Moreover, individuals with fearful attachment style tend to refrain from closeness to minimise disappointment (Bartholomew & Horowitz, 1991).

The dismissing and fearful attachment styles are similar in that both display the avoidance of intimacy, which refers to the degree of people avoiding close contact with others. However, dismissing and fearful attachment styles differ in the need for others' acceptance to maintain a positive self-regard (Bartholomew & Horowitz, 1991). They argue that preoccupied and fearful attachment styles are similar in that both display the need for others to maintain positive self-regards, but preoccupied and fearful attachment styles differ in their readiness to become involved in close relationships, preoccupied implies reaching out to others while fearful implies avoidance of closeness.

Later, Brennan *et al.* (1998) propose that attachment styles can be conceptualised and measured along two dimensions (attachment anxiety and attachment avoidance) that underlie four adult patterns or styles of romantic attachment: secure, preoccupied, dismissing, and fearful. According to these authors, attachment anxiety is the extent to which a person worries that relationship partners may not be available in times of need, has an excessive need for approval, and fears rejection and abandonment. Moreover, attachment avoidance is the extent to which a person has an excessive need for self-reliance, fears depending on others, distrusts relationship partners' goodwill, and strives for emotional and cognitive distance from partners.

In measuring adult attachment style, it is better to use dimensional measures rather than categorical measures of adult attachment style because dimensional measures will allow an increase in the precision of measurement (Obegi *et al.*, 2004). Figure 3.5 describes Obegi *et al.*'s division of four-category attachment styles (secure, preoccupied, dismissing, and fearful) based on two dimensions: anxiety and avoidance.

Figure 3.5 Obegi *et al.*'s Model of Adult Attachment



Source: Obegi *et al.* (2004, p.628)

Based on Figure 3.5, attachment style can fall within two dimensions: avoidance and anxiety. Individuals with secure attachment style are low in anxiety and low in avoidance, whereas individuals with fearful attachment style are high in anxiety and high in avoidance. Preoccupied individuals show high anxiety but low level of avoidance, whereas dismissing individuals show low anxiety but high level of avoidance.

3.4.1 Distinction between Attachment Style and Brand Attachment

Attachment style and brand attachment are different constructs. Previous discussions define attachment style as something that has been developed over time and based on prior experiences, consisting of a systematic pattern of relational expectations, emotions, and behaviours within a person, which captures an individual's emotional and behavioural tendencies (Collins & Read, 1990; Shaver & Mikulincer, 2005).

Brand attachment has been defined as the strength of the bond connecting the brand with the self (Park *et al.*, 2010). According to these authors the bond is exemplified by the rich and accessible mental representation that involves thoughts and feelings about the brand. Mende and Bolton (2011) indicate that attachment strength and attachment style as two distinct constructs. Attachment style is the working model of individuals based on previous

relationships that guides future relationships, while brand attachment is the magnitude between relationships of consumer with a particular brand – reflecting attachment strength.

Overtime, individuals will internalise experiences of their relationships in a way that previous relationships develop a pattern for future relationships (e.g. how does individual project image of other people and image of the self) (Bartholomew & Horowitz, 1991; Bowlby, 1973). Individuals' working models of self and working models of others are the principal cause of progression between early attachment experiences, feelings, cognitions, and behaviours in future relationships, which allow individual in predicting future relationships by designing new proximity-seeking attempts with relational partner without reconsidering from the very beginning (Shaver & Mikulincer, 2005; Bowlby, 1973).

These mean that an individual's internal working model will act as a guide for the relationships between consumer and brand. The internal working model will be reflected in the individual's attachment style. Attachment style, which is shaped by previous relationships experiences (e.g. infant-caregiver relationships), may develop a pattern in explaining a specific relationship, such as brand attachment.

3.4.2 Attachment Style and Consumer Behaviour

Research in psychology has explored the differences in attachment style between individuals as a predictor of several outcomes. Individuals store their actual interactions with attachment figures in the form of two mental representations: working models of others and working models of self (Bowlby, 1969). These concepts of working models explain that real experiences with relational partners are the principal components of cognitions and behaviours within a person in future relationships (Shaver & Mikullincer, 2005).

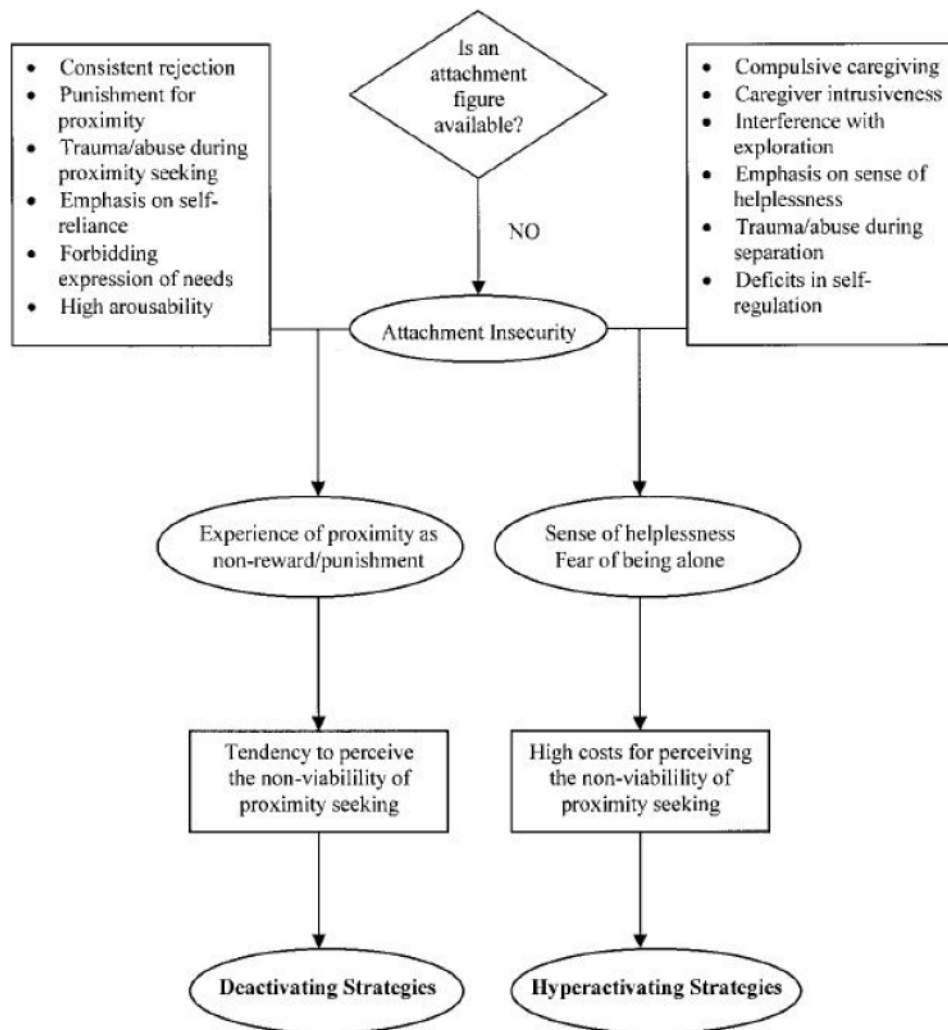
The working models of self and working models of others are the principal cause of progression between early attachment experiences, feelings, cognitions, and behaviours in future relationships and aid individuals in predicting future relationships by designing new proximity-seeking attempts with relational partners without reconsidering from the very beginning (Shaver & Mikulincer, 2005; Bowlby, 1973).

According to Hazan and Shaver (1987) individuals with different types of attachment style, secure, avoidant, and anxious/ambivalent, will experience different experience in their most important love relationships. Their findings show that secure individuals characterised their relationships as friendly, happy, and trusting. Furthermore anxious/ambivalent individuals characterised their relationships as jealousy, emotional highs and lows, and desire for reciprocation, whereas avoidant individuals exhibit a fear of closeness.

Reasons for the differences can be explained by considering hyperactivation strategy and deactivation strategy of the attachment system. According to Shaver and Mikulincer (2005), hyperactivation is a condition when individuals use intense works in proximity-seeking to ensure attachment figures attention and support, whereas deactivation is a condition when individuals suppress or discount any threats that may activate the attachment system by inhibiting proximity-seeking inclinations and actions.

Different people with different attachment styles have different beliefs about the availability and trustworthiness of partners and their own in relationships (Hazan & Shaver, 1987). Individuals with anxious/ambivalent attachment style adopt hyperactivation strategy, whereas individuals with avoidant attachment style adopt deactivation strategy. Mikulincer *et al.* (2003) propose a hierarchical causal framework to determine the adoption of secondary attachment strategies (hyperactivation strategy or deactivation strategy). Their framework is shown in Figure 3.6.

Figure 3.6 The Formation of Secondary Attachment Strategies



Source: Mikulincer *et al.* (2003, p.96)

Figure 3.6 shows the framework that explains the process of adopting secondary attachment strategies. The main reason that individuals adopt hyperactivating or deactivating strategy is because of unavailability of an attachment figure that leads to attachment insecurity (Mikulincer *et al.*, 2003). According to them, the adoption of deactivating strategies occur when attachment-figure unavailability is considered as a non-reward/punishment situation; whereas the adoption of hyperactivating strategies occur when attachment-figure is not available followed by overemphasis on other's unreliability and one's own helplessness.

Shaver and Brennan (1992) show that attachment style (using Hazan and Shaver's three categorisation of attachment style – secure, avoidant and anxious/ambivalent) is a better predictor than the "Big Five" personality traits (Neuroticism, Extraversion, Openness to Experience, Agreeableness, and Conscientiousness) in predicting relationship length,

satisfaction, and commitment. Their argument is that attachment style is more relationship specific than the “Big Five” personality traits.

A study shows that individuals with different attachment styles are different in the positivity of their self-view and different in other structural dimensions of the self (Mikulincer, 1995). Three different self-structure dimensions are being used in the study: (1) hedonic value, (2) self-complexity, and (3) self-discrepancies. Different attachment style means different self-structure in terms of the hedonic value. Individuals may show chronic mood and either positive or negative self-esteem. Not only that, self-structure is full of complexity particularly regarding the divergent level of differentiation and integration upon self-aspects. A person using high number of self-aspects to organise information indicates high differentiation, whereas rapid expansion of the links between different self-aspects, indicates high level of integration. In addition, different attachment style shows different level of self-discrepancies concerning three different selves: actual, ideal, and ought-self.

Attachment style is also found to explain a person’s willingness to form a bond with his/her favourite TV personality (Cole & Leets, 1999). Individuals with anxious/ambivalent style are the most likely to form relationships with their favourite TV personalities, whereas individuals with avoidant style are the least likely to form that kind of relationships. Furthermore, research shows that attachment style is associated with reactions to romantic relationships dissolution (Davis *et al.*, 2003).

Recently, research in marketing put forth attachment style as a salient indicator that may help in explaining different consumer’s behaviour. Thomson & Johnson (2006), in a study investigating the relationships involving service providers and brands, show that attachment style can be a predictor of successful relationships with consumers. Attachment style is also found to play a salient role in consumer-brand relationships (Thomson & Johnson, 2001). Differences in attachment style and brand personality are found to systematically influence purchase likelihood, brand choice and brand attachment (Swaminathan *et al.*, 2009).

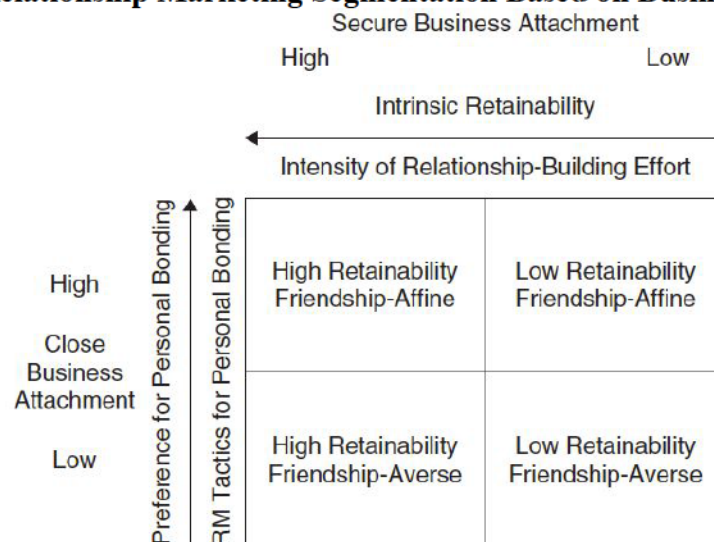
In business-to-business relationships, attachment style is used to capture consumer heterogeneity and used to segment them accordingly to their preference for bonding with business partner (Paulssen, 2009). Not only in business-to-business relationships but also in

the services context, attachment style plays a salient role in explaining consumer relationship with firms and its employees (Mende & Bolton, 2011).

A study by Thomson and Johnson (2001) in commercial relationships, identifies that attachment style, can explain consumer's emotions and satisfaction. They operate two different measurements of satisfaction, (1) satisfaction based on cognitions and (2) satisfaction based on emotions. Attachment style is found as significant predictor for both forms of satisfaction. Furthermore, among relationships between consumers and brands as well as consumers and service providers, attachment style is found to influence their evaluations (e.g. satisfaction, commitment, involvement) on the relationship (Thomson & Johnson, 2006). Paulssen (2009) differentiates between personal attachment style and business attachment style. Both of them are found to increase satisfaction, trust and loyalty. Moreover, he confirms that trust and satisfaction mediates the relationships between personal and business attachment style with loyalty.

Business attachment can fall under two dimensions: (1) secure business attachment and (2) close business attachment (Paulssen, 2009). Ability and willingness to rely on business partner is central to secure business attachment, whereas desire to develop personal bonds with a business partner or its employees is central to close business attachment. Paulssen (2009) offers a way to identify and segment consumers based on their level of secure and close business attachment. Paulssen's matrix can be seen in Figure 3.7 below.

Figure 3.7 Relationship Marketing Segmentation Based on Business Attachment



Source: Paulssen (2009, p.524)

As shown in Figure 3.7, Paulssen (2009) uses two dimensions, secure business attachment and close business attachment to segment business attachment. Paulssen divides secure and close business attachment based on its degree, high or low. Basically, he suggests that if consumers have high level of secure and close business attachment, they should be immensely kept. On the other hand, low consumers with low level of secure and close business attachment should not be kept any longer.

Another study shows that attachment style is closely related to whether consumer prefers a brand with exciting or sincere personality, which may explain the formation of brand attachment and purchase likelihood (Swaminathan *et al.*, 2009). The research also finds that consumer preference on which brand personality they prefer, according to their attachment style, also applies to familiar to unfamiliar brands and to brand extensions.

While Mende & Bolton (2011), in the services context, explains that consumers with different attachment styles will have different perception in terms of satisfaction, trust, and affective commitment. This covers consumers-firms relationships and consumers-employees relationships. Mende and Bolton offer strategies that can be used concerning these two types of relationships. Mende and Bolton's matrix can be seen in Figure 3.8 below.

Figure 3.8 Matrix of Attachment Styles Across Relationship Level

		Customer Attachment Style Toward the Firm	
		Secure (Low Customer Attachment Anxiety and Low Customer Attachment Avoidance)	Insecure (High Customer Attachment Anxiety, or High Customer Attachment Avoidance, or both)
Customer Attachment Style Toward the Employee	Secure	1 → Balanced, Bi-Level Relationship Nurturing: Allocate RM resources across both relational levels; i.e., consistent RM triggers via multiple touch points over time (firm- and employee-based).	2 → Employee-Accentuated Relationship Nurturing: RM positions employee as platform of relationship (e.g., local insurance agent visits customers, agent serves as link to the insurance firm; birthday or holiday cards are sent by agent).
	Insecure	3 → Firm-Accentuated Relationship Nurturing: RM positions firm as platform of relationship (e.g., customized website, online community, electronic newsletters, designated call center, birthday or holiday card sent by firm, ads that personify the firm). Target those customers who score high(est) on attachment anxiety and/or avoidance toward the employee.	4 → Relationship Minimizing: Lowest need for RM triggers. Firm can underline strengths of offering without bothering customers. Firms provide resources for customers to choose if they want to have access (e.g., 24/7 call center availability, website).

RM = Relationship Marketing

Source: Mende and Bolton (2011, p.296)

Figure 3.8 offers different strategies that can be used in different conditions. If consumer's attachment style towards firms and employees is secure, a balanced bi-level relationship strategy is justified. If it is insecure, a relationship minimising strategy is justified. If consumer's attachment style towards firms is secure while towards employees is insecure, a firm-accentuated relationship is justified. On the contrary, if consumer's attachment style towards firm is insecure while towards employees is secure; an employee-accentuated relationship is justified.

3.5 Consequences of Brand Attachment

Positive outcomes of having a strong brand attachment have also been well documented in the marketing literature. Park and MacInnis (2006) propose that brand attachment is able to explain higher level of consumer's behaviours. It is also considered a construct that can explain consumer willingness to invest and make sacrifices (Thomson *et al.*, 2005). Previous research also shows that brand attachment can help in determining consumers' commitment to brands (Kim *et al.*, 2005) and determining whether brand extensions will be successful or not (Fedorikhin *et al.*, 2008).

Besides that, several studies (e.g. Orth *et al.*, 2010; Vlachos *et al.*, 2010) have shown that brand attachment leads to commitment, loyalty, positive word-of-mouth, willingness to pay price premium, minimise switching and maximise defensive act against negative information. Brand attachment has been considered one of the drivers of brand equity in terms of predicting consumer's actual behaviours, such as: intention to perform difficult behaviours, actual purchase behaviours and so forth (Park *et al.*, 2010). Although these studies display various outcomes of stronger brand attachment, these outcomes can be categorised into loyalty. Thus, this study proposes brand loyalty as a key outcome of brand attachment.

Loyalty has been considered as one of the most important constructs in marketing. Brand loyalty has been defined as the consumer's commitment to consistently patronize or re-purchasing a brand (Oliver, 1999). Brand loyalty can be categorized under two aspects: attitudinal and behavioural (Chaudhuri & Holbrook, 2001). Attitudinal loyalty reflecting consumers' intention to recommend, while purchase refers to the psychological commitment being made by the consumer in the purchase operation; whereas behavioural loyalty refers to the frequency of repeat purchase (Nam *et al.*, 2011).

3.6 Chapter Summary

Understanding how to form brand attachment is important since brand attachment can lead to positive consumer behaviours. Although several studies have started to propose ways in building stronger brand attachment, these studies used different conceptualisation and measurement of brand attachment. Conceptualisation of brand attachment has moved from capturing only the heart to capturing the heart and mind (Park *et al.*, 2006; Fedorikhin *et al.*, 2008). Park *et al.* (2010) suggest that it is worthwhile in doing research focusing on finding the antecedents of brand attachment concerning brand-self connection and brand prominence. In addition, Brocato *et al.* (2014) also suggest that research on how a firm can develop strong emotional ties between the consumers and the brand is needed.

Based on the theoretical and empirical works, several variables have been identified as prominent factors in building stronger brand attachment. Informed by two theories, self-concept theory and attachment theory, these variables are: self-congruence, brand experience, and brand responsiveness. Self-congruence shares symbolic qualities that often determine brand evaluation and adoption (Solomon, 1983). For instance, recent research displays that brand-self congruence affects loyalty (Ekinici *et al.*, 2013). According to these authors, consumers use brands to express their self-identity. On the other hand, brand experience and brand responsiveness are fundamental in selecting an attachment figure in a relationship (Hazan & Shaver, 1994). Brakus *et al.* (2009) propose that experience may lead to attachment. Recently, a study in the context of retailing (Dolbec & Chebat, 2013) displays that brand experience affects emotional bonding. Nevertheless, Schmitt (2013) believes that further studies examining the role of experience towards attachment are needed. Regarding the relationship between brand responsiveness and brand attachment, a study in the context of human brands (Thomson, 2006) has shown that responsiveness affects separation distress – an indicator of attachment. Thus, these three variables fit are proposed as the antecedents of brand attachment.

Self-congruence is chosen as one of the antecedents in this study because brand attachment has been conceptualised as the power of the bond linking the brand and the self (Park *et al.*, 2010). Therefore, self-congruence, which is the fit between the brand image and the self, may positively influence brand attachment. Higher congruity between self-image and the brand image will result in stronger connection between the brand and the self. Additionally, Malär *et al.* (2011) has proposed self-congruity with the brand personality to be the antecedents of

emotional brand attachment. The present study extends the work of Malär *et al.* (2011) in two ways. First, Malär *et al.* (2011) used the measurement of brand attachment that covers only emotions. In this study, the measurement of brand attachment covers emotions and cognitions. Second, Malär *et al.* (2011) used the congruity with brand personality and two forms of self-congruence (actual self-congruence and ideal self-congruence). This study will use the congruity with brand image and three forms of self-congruence, actual, ideal, and social self-congruence.

The second variable proposed as the antecedents of brand attachment is brand experience. Hazan and Shaver (1994) identify familiarity as one of the prominent factors that influence the selection of an attachment figure in a relationship. Familiarity is the collection of indirect and direct experiences with the brand (Alba & Hutchinson, 1987). Park *et al.* (2010) argue that the mental representations - which can be obtained from past experiences with the brand – exemplify the bond between the brand and the self. Hence, higher brand experience may lead to stronger brand attachment. Brand experience has been conceptualised as consisting of four dimensions: sensory, affective, intellectual, and behavioural (Brakus *et al.*, 2009). They call for further research on finding long-term consequences of brand experience. Besides that, they also argue that over time brand experience may lead to stronger brand attachment. Subsequently, Schmitt (2013) calls for further research on the link between brand experience and brand attachment. The present study will empirically test the argument, whether it is true or not that brand experience lead to stronger brand attachment. Apart from that, it will show which of the dimension of brand experience has the strongest effect to predict brand attachment.

The third variable being proposed as the antecedents of brand attachment is brand responsiveness. Hazan and Shaver (1994) identify that not only familiarity but also responsiveness is the foundation for attachment. As has been documented before, brand can be responsive if the brand is able to fulfil three basic psychological needs: autonomy, relatedness, and competence (Deci & Ryan, 2000; La Guardia & Patrick, 2008; Thomson, 2006). Thomson (2006) has proposed that autonomy and relatedness, while not suppressing competence will result in stronger attachment strength. However, Thomson's study focuses only on the context of human brands. Moreover, Thomson used separation distress as the indicator of attachment strength. Thomson *et al.* (2005) believe that a lack of scale to measure consumers' attachment to brands will create hard and challenging efforts for both

practitioners and researchers to evaluate the strength of the relationship between consumers and brands. The present study will extend the work of Thomson (2006) by not only studying in the context of human brand and using dedicated measurement for brand attachment.

Malär *et al.* (2011) argue that in studying the factors that can influence brand attachment, one should think about different characteristics and predispositions. Some factors may strengthen or weaken the factors that influence brand attachment. It is important to consider several prominent moderating variables. This study proposed attachment style as a prominent moderating variable. Attachment style includes emotional and behavioural tendencies from an individual (Collins & Read, 1990), which will be used as a guide for future relationships (Bartholomew & Horowitz, 1991; Bowlby, 1973). Different people possess different attachment style. The factors that will influence the formation and outcome of brand attachment may be different for different types of consumers (e.g. insecure vs. secure) as well.

As it has been discussed above, attachment style reflects two dimensions: anxiety and avoidance. If a consumer has high anxiety and avoidance, that consumer is considered to possess insecurity. Secure individuals have the ability to reduce distress and remove obstacles through turning to others, whereas insecure individuals are less-able to confront the distress-eliciting situation exhibiting fewer resources to explore the environment, have fun with others or attend to others' needs (Mikulincer *et al.*, 2003). When failure of proximity seeking to relieve distress occurs, insecure individuals carry-out secondary strategies: hyperactivation and deactivation (Shaver & Mikulincer, 2005; Mikulincer *et al.*, 2003).

Hyperactivation strategy has been defined as “intense efforts to attain proximity to attachment figures and ensure their attention and support”, whereas deactivation strategy has been defined as “the inhibition of proximity-seeking inclinations and actions, and the suppression or discounting of any threat that may activate the attachment system” (Shaver & Mikulincer, 2005, p. 26). Insecure attachment has been argued as the root to multifold of dysfunctional behaviours that result in relationship dissatisfaction and dissolution (Hazan & Shaver, 1994). It may be because insecure attachment mobilises the activation of hyperactivating and deactivating strategies. Hyperactivating and deactivating strategies hold the attachment system chronically activated and in check, causing insecure people constantly on the alert for threats, separations, and betrayals with serious consequences for cognitive and emotional

openness (Mikulincer *et al.*, 2003). Hence, when insecurity occurs, it is proposed that the relationships of brand attachment with its antecedents and consequences will be moderated.

For the consequences of brand attachment, this study put forward brand loyalty as a key consequence of stronger brand attachment. Previous research (e.g. Park *et al.*, 2010; Vlachos *et al.*, 2010; Orth *et al.*, 2010; Fedorikhin *et al.*, 2008; Kim *et al.*, 2005) documented various outcomes of stronger attachment. For instance, Park *et al.* (2010) show that brand attachment affects consumers' purchasing behaviours. Recent research (Schmalz & Orth, 2012) displays that attachment acts as a buffer towards companies or brands unethical behaviours. Additionally, Jang *et al.* (2015) show that store attachment leads to store loyalty and Hudson *et al.* (2015) reveals that emotional attachment positively influences brand relationship quality and word-of-mouth. Nevertheless, these outcomes (e.g. willingness to pay a price premium, positive word-of-mouth) are all part of brand loyalty. Hence, brand loyalty fits as the consequence of brand attachment.

CHAPTER 4

THE RESEARCH MODEL

4.1 Introduction

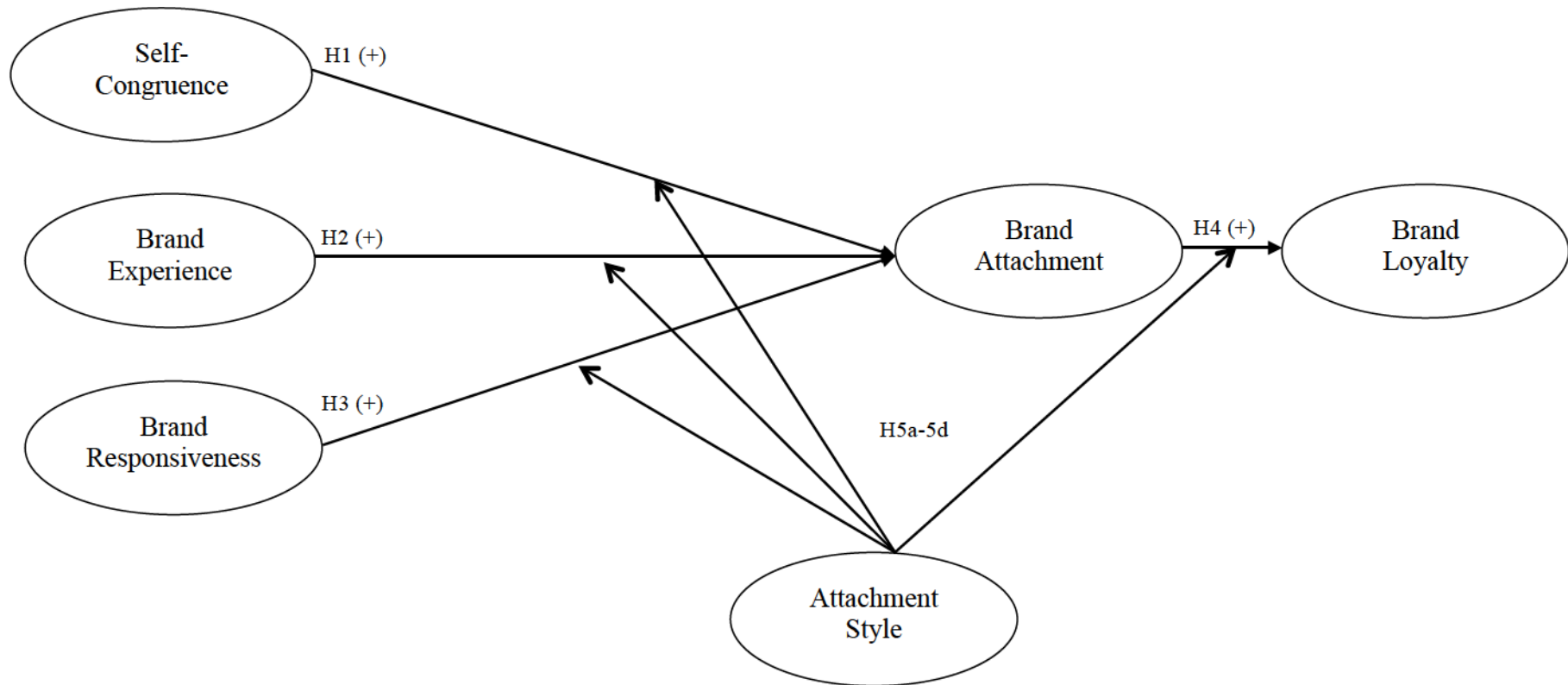
The purpose of this chapter is to discuss the research model and the development of the hypotheses within this study. First, explanation on the development of the research model will be discussed. In total there are six variables within the model: (1) self-congruence, (2) brand experience, (3) brand responsiveness, (4) attachment style, (5) brand attachment, and (6) brand loyalty.

Several of these variables are multidimensional, such as: self-congruence, brand experience, brand responsiveness, attachment style and brand attachment. Three variables are proposed as the determinants of stronger brand attachment (self-congruence, brand experience, and brand responsiveness). Attachment style is proposed as a moderator between the relationships of brand attachment and its antecedents as well as between brand attachment and brand loyalty, whereas brand loyalty is proposed as the outcome of brand attachment. The discussion continues to the development of research hypotheses in this study.

4.2 The Research Model

The research model, as shown in Figure 4.1 below, offers explanation on factors that affect the strength of brand attachment. As it has been stated, further research is needed to provide ways for marketers to enhance brand attachment, which has been conceptualised as having two components: (1) brand-self connection and (2) brand prominence (Park *et al.*, 2010). The conceptual framework is based on two theories: (1) attachment theory on close relationships by Hazan and Shaver (1994) and (2) self-concept by Reed (2002) along with adaptation of the conceptual model suggested by Malär *et al.* (2011).

Figure 4.1 Research Model



The first antecedent is self-congruence. It has been suggested by Malär *et al.* (2011) that self-congruity between the actual and ideal self-concept with the brand personality will positively influence emotional brand attachment. The conceptualisation of brand attachment has moved from capturing emotional bonding to capture both emotional and cognitive bonding between consumers and brands (e.g. Fedorikhin *et al.*, 2008; Park *et al.*, 2006). The present research proposed that self-congruence between one's self and brand image may influence not only emotions but also cognitions. This study also includes social self-congruence besides actual and ideal self-congruence, since consumers frequently depend upon social meanings inherent in brands (Solomon, 1983).

The second antecedent is brand experience. It has been argued that familiarity and responsiveness determine the selection of an attachment figure (Hazan & Shaver, 1994). Familiarity has been defined as the collection of direct and indirect experiences (Alba & Hutchinson, 1987). In their quest of developing scale for measuring brand experience, Brakus *et al.* (2009) mentioned that over time brand experience may lead to emotional attachment between consumer and brand. The present research will use these arguments and test whether brand experience, which includes four dimensions (sensory, affective, intellectual, and behavioural), will positively affect brand attachment or not.

The third antecedent is brand responsiveness. In his study, Thomson (2006) suggests that human brand's responsiveness, through the fulfilment of basic psychological needs (autonomy, relatedness, and competence), is an important determinant of attachment strength. However, in his study separation distress is used as the indicator of attachment strength, not emotional or cognitive bonding. The present research proposed that brand responsiveness, in a sense of fulfilling autonomy, relatedness, and competence may also be a salient determinant of brand attachment.

In total three variables are proposed as the determinants of brand attachment: (1) self-congruence, (2) brand experience, and (3) brand responsiveness. This study focuses on the psychological constructs closely related to the self-concept; therefore these three variables are chosen as the determinants of brand attachment. The focus on self-concept is because brand attachment has been conceptualised to reflect brand-self connection and brand prominence (Park *et al.*, 2010) and is a type of self-extension (Kleine & Baker, 2004).

Afterwards, not only discussing the antecedents of brand attachment, the present research will also discuss the consequences of brand attachment. Brand loyalty is proposed to be the outcome of brand attachment. A highly prominent topic in marketing is about comprehending the formation of relationships between consumer and brands that lead to loyalty (Keller, 2012). In addition, this study will also investigate the mediating role of brand attachment on the relationship between self-congruence, brand experience, brand responsiveness, and brand loyalty.

Several studies have documented that emotional brand attachment predicts brand loyalty (Thomson *et al.*, 2005; Orth *et al.*, 2010). The present research argued that brand attachment, which includes brand-self connection and brand prominence, will predicts brand loyalty. It is also argued that brand attachment has a much more prominent role than only acting as the antecedent of brand loyalty, but also as a mediator of several variables that positively influence brand loyalty.

The present study also examines the moderating variable of the relationship between brand attachment and its antecedents as well as between brand attachment and brand loyalty. Malär *et al.* (2011) argue that the study of determinants of brand attachment should take into account consumers' differences in consumers' predispositions and characteristics. Consumers are heterogeneous and this means that the factors influencing brand attachment will be different for several groups of consumers. To capture consumers' heterogeneity, the study proposes to use attachment style.

A stream of research notes that attachment style includes emotional and behavioural tendencies from an individual (Collins & Read, 1990), which will be used as a guide for future relationships (Bartholomew & Horowitz, 1991; Bowlby, 1973). Further, Swaminathan *et al.* (2009) indicate in their study on brand relationships that the interaction with attachment objects will be distinct for consumers with different attachment style, influencing brand choice and purchase likelihood.

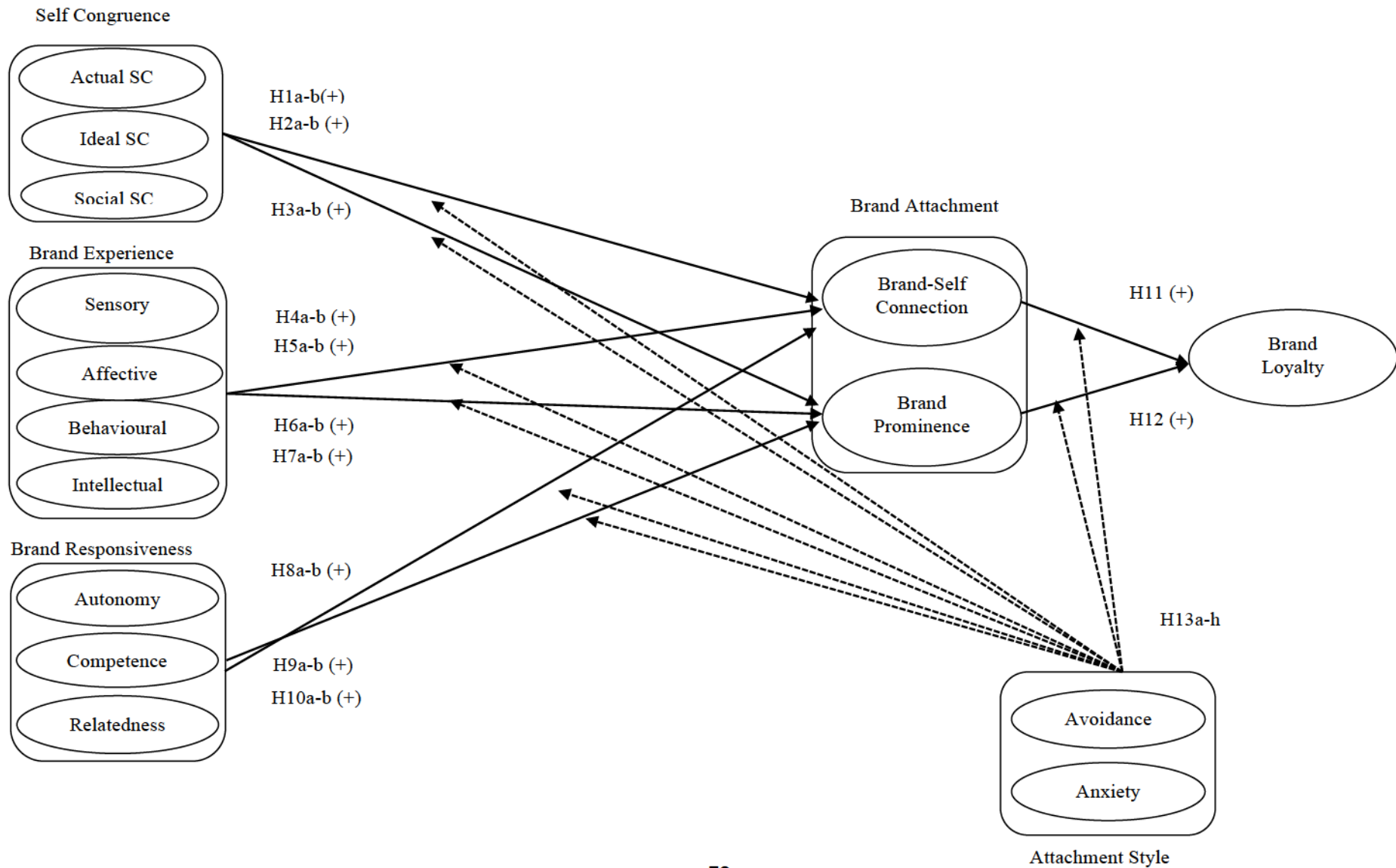
As can be seen from Figure 4.1, three variables are proposed to positively influence brand attachment: (1) self-congruence, (2) brand experience, and (3) brand responsiveness. Attachment style is proposed to be the moderator between the relationships of brand

attachment with its antecedents and outcome. Attachment style concerns the differences between groups of consumers. Higher level of self-congruence will indicate stronger brand attachment. Alongside stronger brand experience and higher brand responsiveness will result in stronger brand attachment. However, these relationships are influenced by consumers' internal working model, their attachment style.

Afterwards, the model shows the consequences of brand attachment. It is proposed that brand loyalty is the outcome of brand attachment. This relationship is also moderated by attachment style. Besides that, brand attachment is proposed to play a mediating role between possession attachment, self-congruence, brand experience, brand responsiveness, and brand loyalty. Figure 4.2 below shows a more comprehensive research model showing that self-congruence, brand experience, brand responsiveness, attachment style, and brand attachment are multidimensional constructs.

As shown in Figure 4.2 brand attachment consists of brand-self connection and brand prominence. Self-congruence consists of three dimensions: actual self-congruence, ideal self-congruence, and social self-congruence. Brand experience consists of four dimensions: affective, sensory, behavioural, and intellectual. Brand responsiveness consists of three dimensions: autonomy, relatedness, and competence. Attachment style includes two dimensions: anxiety and avoidance, since it is best measured using two dimensions: anxiety and avoidance (Obegi *et al.*, 2004; Brennan *et al.*, 1998).

Figure 4.2 Comprehensive Research Model



4.3 Hypotheses Development

4.3.1 *Effect of Self-Congruence on Brand Attachment*

Self-expansion theory postulates that individuals have motivations to expand themselves. They expand themselves by improving their abilities to accomplish goals (Reimann & Aron, 2009). In order to achieve and accomplish goals, individuals are motivated to attain physical and social resources, perspectives, and identities (Aron *et al.*, 2001). Basically, there are two integral ideas being displayed by self-expansion theory (Reimann & Aron, 2009; Aron *et al.*, 2001): (1) “motivation to expand the self” and (2) “inclusion of close others in the self”. The desire to include close others into their conception of self is not confined to other person but can also incorporate brands (Reimann *et al.*, 2012; Malär *et al.*, 2011).

Individuals’ motivations to expand themselves can involve a rapid expansion of the self. Within interpersonal relationships, rapid expansion of the self appears in a new romantic relationship which produces greater positive affects (Reimann & Aron, 2009). It has been proposed that consumers purchase brands to construct their self-concepts (Escalas & Bettman, 2005). Within consumer-brand relationship, when consumers recently have fallen in love with a brand and obtain the brand, rapid expansion of the self appears.

The second idea of self-expansion theory is the inclusions of close others in the self. Park *et al.* (2010) argue that closer bond between consumer and brand is the result of the process of including the brand in the self. Brand provides meaningful aspect to the self by conveying crucial identity concerns, tasks or themes (Fournier, 1998). Not only acting as recipients of the brand’s resources, in the process of self-expansion consumers actively invest their own resources, such as social, financial, and time resources as well as higher willingness in running through the resources (Park *et al.*, 2010). Inclusion of a brand into one’s self (resources, perspectives, and identity) will eventually lead to stronger bond with the brand (Reimann *et al.*, 2012).

The notion of self-expansion theory, rapid expansion and inclusion mechanism, which explains why consumers form relationships with brands, is in line with the notion of self-congruence (Sirgy, 1982). Based on the notion of self-congruence, consumers are more likely to interact with a brand that is highly harmonious with one’s self-image (Sirgy, 1982).

Therefore, self-congruence plays a salient role in explaining the formation of brand attachment. Self-congruence has been defined as the fit between image/personality of the consumer's self with the brand's image/personality (Aaker, 1999; Sirgy, 1982).

Brands can deliver psychological benefits to consumers in constructing their self-identity and/or present themselves to others (Escalas & Bettman, 2003). According to Aaker (1999), an individual who feels that the brand represents his/her particular personality will create higher individual's preference for that particular brand. Hence, Escalas and Bettman (2003) also identify that strong connection and congruity between consumer's self-concept, reference group, and the brand increase the likeability to develop strong brand attachment. Another research (Escalas & Bettman, 2005) shows that brand's images that are consistent with images from an in-group, indicating brand congruence, will result in a higher level of connection between consumers' self and brands.

As reported by Sirgy (1982), self-concept can be conceptualised to several components: actual-self, ideal-self, and social-self. Actual-self is who the consumer actually is, ideal-self is who the consumer would want to be, and social-self is what the consumer wants other people to see him/her. Besides that, self-concept also consists of several self-concept motives, such as: self-consistency, self-enhancement, and social consistency (Sirgy *et al.*, 2000; Swann *et al.*, 1987). Self-consistency motives reinforce the actual-self, whereas self-enhancement motives reinforce the ideal-self and social consistency motives reinforce the social-self.

Consumers tend to perceive that brands carry images comprising numerous symbolic meanings (Dolich, 1969). Accordingly, consumers believe brands can help them differentiate their self-concepts with others. It is known that when another person purchases different brand than he/she purchases, that person is considered not having similar self-concepts (Grubb & Hupp, 1968). This occurs because of the characteristic that the brand carries. As Grubb and Hupp (1968) identify, consumers are very clear in perceiving the characteristics of other consumers' self-concept who purchases similar brand including the characteristics of other consumers' self-concept who purchases contrasting brand.

Dolich (1969) conceives that maintaining or enhancing consumer' self-concept can only be done by brands that carry symbolic meanings identical to their self-concept. Consequently, a particular brand is capable in helping consumer to be consistent with their actual-self or

achieve their ideal-self. In addition, during social activities, consumer uses a particular brand because of the intention to be affiliated with other people who also use that brand (Grubb & Hupp, 1968). This means that brands are able to play a role in consumer's social self. Consumers tend to consume brand that they consider having the same characteristic as their self-concept rather than brand that is not (Dolich, 1969). Hence, congruity between self-concept and the brand's images is salient in determining whether consumer will choose that brand or not.

Self-consistency motive postulates that because individuals consider that their thought processes about information are trustworthy, diagnostic, and accurate, they strive for acquiring information that confirms and preserves their self-conceptions (Swann *et al.*, 1987). Escalas and Bettman (2003) argue that individuals also possess the need for self-knowledge including self-verification. They explain that individuals tend to seek out, interpret, and adopt self-confirmatory evidences and from social environment to fulfil the need for self-knowledge.

Consumers will be stimulated to purchase a brand with an image (positive or negative) that is congruent with his/her self-image belief or actual self (Sirgy, 1982; Aaker, 1999). Actual self-congruence refers to the degree of fit between consumer's actual self-image with the brand image (Mehta, 1999; Hong & Zinkhan, 1995). High convergence levels of self-image with brand image influence consumer's persuasion and interest in purchasing the brand (Mehta, 1999). In a quest for a new approach of measuring self-congruence, it is found that there is a strong correlation between self-congruence and brand attitude (Sirgy *et al.*, 1997). When consumer's self-concept is highly congruent with the brand's personalities, consumer will exhibit higher preferences for that brand as well as enhancing consumer's attitude toward the brand (Aaker, 1999).

Actual self-congruence has been shown to positively affect dimensions of brand attachment, emotional dependence and separation anxiety (Kim *et al.*, 2005). Malär *et al.* (2011) in their research demonstrate that actual self-congruence is a crucial concept that plays a prominent role in creating and strengthening emotional brand attachment. They find that self-verification motive lead consumer to purchase a brand that is congruent with his/her actual-self, which in the end will increase positive emotions (i.e., affection, connection, and passion).

This study argues that the motive (self-verification or self-consistency) will not only lead to greater emotional bonding but also cognitive bonding towards the brand. Brands can represent who consumers actually are, when this happens a connection between consumers and brands occurs (Park *et al.*, 2010). Self-consistency motive will lead consumers to choose a brand that is close to their actual self-concept to represent their identity. Hence, higher congruity between actual-self and the brand image may lead to stronger brand-self connection. It is likely that consumers incorporated a brand that has high congruity with the actual-self into their self. Thus, the following hypothesis is posited:

H1a – Actual self-congruence has positive effects on brand-self connection.

If consumers incorporate a particular brand into their self-concept because they want to verify, validate, and sustain their actual-self, then consumers will have thoughts about that brand in their mind. Moreover, research suggests that actual self-congruence positively influences consumers' passion, affection and connection toward the brand (Malär *et al.*, 2011). This means that consumers put positive feelings about the brand in their mind. Over time, the thoughts and feelings about the brand will become salient in the consumers' mind. Thus, the following hypothesis is posited:

H1b – Actual self-congruence has positive effects on brand prominence.

Swann *et al.* (1987) note that self-enhancement motive postulates that individuals, with negative self-concepts exhibiting lower degree of self-esteem, are motivated to increase their feelings of personal worth by trying to enhance their self-views. Not only that, self-enhancement motive increases the tendency to maximise positive feedback in order to gain social approval (Escalas & Bettman, 2003). Consumers will be stimulated to purchase a positively valued brand to maintain his/her positive self-image or ideal-self (Sirgy, 1982; Aaker, 1999). Ideal self-congruence refers to the degree of fit between consumer's ideal self-image with the brand image (Hong & Zinkhan, 1995; Mehta, 1999).

Consumers use brands as tools and symbols for social integration, highlight personal accomplishment, provide self-esteem, differentiate one self, express individuality, and help one through life transitions (Escalas, 2004). As it has been discussed above, high level of self-congruence, either actual or ideal self-congruence will influence consumer's brand attitude

and brand choice (Mehta, 1999; Sirgy *et al.*, 1997). Moreover, a stream of research (Aaker, 1999; Escalas & Bettman, 2005) has shown that self-congruence, comprising ideal self-congruence, also positively affects brand attachment.

Consumer has the motivations to enhance their self-esteem because of self-enhancement motive, this will urge consumer to purchase brand that represent their aspirations and dreams (ideal-self) which will lead to stronger passion, affection, and connection (Malär *et al.*, 2011). Kim *et al.* (2005) identify that congruity between ideal-self with brand personality positively influences emotional dependence and separation anxiety.

By purchasing brand that provides self-esteem enhancement, consumers may not just increase positive feelings toward the brand but also their connection with the brand. Brands with higher capabilities to enhance consumers' ideal-self are likely to exhibit higher probability being more preferable (Hong & Zinkhan, 1995). Self-enhancement motive urge consumers to pursue their ideal-self, which leads consumers to choose a brand that can help in projecting their ideal-self. As in the case of sky diving activities, it is known that the participants have the fondness for accomplishment and sense of competence in order to construct new identity (Celsi *et al.*, 1993). Therefore, higher level of congruity between ideal self-concept and the brand image may lead to higher brand-self connection. Thus, the following hypothesis is posited:

H2a – Ideal self-congruence has positive effects on brand-self connection.

The general assumption that is used previously on actual self-congruence also applies here. The difference is in the motive that consumers have. In ideal self-congruence, consumers incorporate a particular brand into their self-concept because they want to enhance their self-esteem (Escalas, 2004). Malär *et al.* (2011) suggest that passion, affection and connection toward brand are also positively influenced by ideal self-congruence. Based on these, over time the brand will become prominent in consumers' mind because of the cognitive and affective bond of using the brand to enhance their self-esteem. Thus, the following hypothesis is posited:

H2b – Ideal self-congruence has positive effects on brand prominence.

People, as “social animals”, always contemplate with how others view and react to their actions since they obtain a drive to be socially connected (Loveland *et al.*, 2010). Sirgy (1982) notes that social comparison theory, comparing what one’s own and consume with what others’ own and consume, can be used to explain how consumers evaluate themselves. Based on social consistency motive, individuals are motivated to conserve an image others have of them and feel uncomfortable to act inconsistently with how they believe others view who they are (Sirgy *et al.*, 2000). Consumers use others, such as reference groups, which share similar beliefs about the world, in order to gain information and meaning (Escalas & Bettman, 2005). Social self-congruence refers to the degree of fit between a consumer’s social self-image and a brand image (Sirgy, 1982; Kim *et al.*, 2005).

According to Grubb and Hupp (1968), social communication between consumers depends on individual attributes and environmental situation. They argue that consumers’ motives for consistency and enhancement rely on the response of significant others which make them struggle for positive acknowledgement from that significant others. Just like in the case of sky diving activities, the participants are longing for other people acknowledgement for their sense of mastery (Celsi *et al.*, 1993). Consumers do not only possess the motives for keeping their actual-self and reaching their ideal-self, also consider other people reactions. Thus, they always strive for their social-self as well.

Escalas and Bettman (2003) argue that connections between the self and brand exist through an indirect congruity. There is supposed to be a congruity between the brand and reference group for that to happen since consumers prefer a bonding with brands that also congruence with their reference group. Afterwards, Escalas and Bettman (2005) also confirm that consumers tend to have stronger connection with brands that are consistent with the image of an in-group. Previous research (Kim *et al.*, 2005) identifies emotional dependence and separation anxiety as the dimensions of brand attachment, note that congruity between social-self and brand personality has a positive influence on emotional dependence and separation anxiety. Consumers are always structured within their social identities, on how they diagnose the self by themselves and others (Kleine *et al.*, 1993). How others think about one self plays a salient role in one’s life. Along with that, consumers tend to use a brand that can help their social identities. Therefore, higher level of congruity between social self-concept and the brand image may lead to higher brand-self connection. Thus, the following hypothesis is posited:

H3a – Social self-congruence has positive effects on brand-self connection.

Social consistency motive emphasis on how consumers think that it is important to have consistent image with reference group or in-group (Escalas & Bettman, 2003), which increase the tendency of consuming brands that is in-line with their social identities (Kleine *et al.*, 1993). Using brands that are also used within the social groups where the consumers belong will increase the perceived frequency and ease of feelings and thoughts. Hence, over time consumers' will develop positive memories about that brand which indicate saliency. Thus, the following hypothesis is posited:

H3b – Social self-congruence has positive effects on brand prominence.

4.3.2 *Effect of Brand Experience on Brand Attachment*

Familiarity and responsiveness are two things that related to the selection of an attachment figure (Hazan & Shaver, 1994). They propose that familiarity and responsiveness are fundamental to attachment because both dictate and influence the preferences and the selection process of an attachment figure. Familiarity has been defined as consumers' accumulate their product or brand related experiences (Kent & Allen, 1994; Alba & Hutchinson, 1987). Thus, consumer's experiences with the brand are the indicator whether they are familiar with the brand or not. Moreover, mental representations, which include particular experiences with the brand, exemplify the bond linking the self with the brand (Park *et al.*, 2010). Therefore, experiences with the brand are prominent to brand attachment.

In experiential marketing consumers are "rational and emotional animals" because they do not only think about the function values of the brand or product to solve their problems but also exhibit sensations, thoughts and feelings toward the brand or product (Schmitt, 1999). Consumers use experiences as a medium to tell stories about themselves (Arnould & Price, 1993). Hence, through experiences with the brand, consumers may evoke cognitions and emotions toward the brands. Experiences can also create bonding even though sometimes it is provisional with the help of several factors, such as: settings, other people, and so forth (Arnould & Price, 1993).

Experiences, singularised through participation and observation and become irreplaceable, that deliver symbolic benefits are both affective and cognitive in nature, which involves psychological appropriation, as well as self-definition, intra-personal and interpersonal dimensions (Kleine & Baker, 2004). Learning from experiences is more salient to consumer's self-identified goals, thus it is more likely to be self-relevant (Hoch, 2002). Greater experience is found to increase consumer's self-confidence in trying store brands (Mieres *et al.*, 2006).

Besides that, experiences are considered as a type of extended self (Belk, 1988). He argues that extended self plays a prominent role in one's sense of self. Experiences can evoke memory of past incidents. Belk (1988) proposes that as consumers accumulate their past experiences, attachment to certain possessions containing that experiences will grow. Supporting and transmitting emotional content are the abilities of experience (Hoch, 2002). Emotional bonds may result from brand experiences over a period of time (Brakus *et al.*, 2009).

Consumers increase understanding, through the experience of purchasing a specific product category, this will increase knowledge on evaluating a product (Grønhaug, 1972). When consumers have more experience with the brand, they will be more familiar with the brand, which in the end increases favourable attitude towards the brand (Pae *et al.*, 2002). Having great experience with a certain brand and satisfied with it increase the probability that the consumers will buy the brand regularly (Mieres *et al.*, 2006). Further, Alba and Hutchinson (1987) note that collection of abundant information is the result of extensive experience, which allows consumers to involve more brands in their memory-based evoked sets and to elicit and employ more attributes during memory-based decision making.

Celsi *et al.* (1993) study on high-risk sport (sky diving) shows that the activities containing pleasure and enthusiasm as well as the sense of thrill and excitement give the participants extraordinary experiences. They propose that at the individual level flow experience occurs, and this flow experience, profoundly satisfying by accommodating a sense of self and self-efficacy, establish bonding. The study shows that sensory experience help in the creation of bonding between participants. Another study on river rafting (Arnould & Price, 1993) also shows that sensory experience plays a role in setting-up the bonding. Mix sensations from the experience, such as: communion with nature, fear, danger, mastery and so forth, support

consumer's attachment with other participants and the activity. The present study argues that sensory brand experiences can also increase the likelihood for connection between the self and the brands to occur. Thus, the following hypothesis is posited:

H4a – Sensory brand experience has positive effects on brand-self connection.

Research shows that a vivid recall of sensations from the river rafting experience is evidenced in consumers' memories (Arnould & Price, 1993). This means that thrilling sensations from river rafting experience create positive memories in mind. Just like in sky diving activities where the participants are motivated for thrill seeking in order to obtain pleasure and fun (Celsi *et al.*, 1993). Therefore, the present study argues that sensory brand experience will evoke positive memories and over time these memories will increase the saliency of the brand. Thus, the following hypothesis is posited:

H4b – Sensory brand experience has positive effects on brand prominence.

In the study on river rafting (Arnould & Price, 1993) also shows evidences that induce affective experiences. At the end and later when remembering the rafting experience, the participants show their feelings and emotions which form an attachment toward other members and the rafting itself. This also evidenced in extreme activity, such as sky diving. Sky diving activities provide shared experience between participants that construe meaning refers to phatic communion (Celsi *et al.*, 1993). According to them, it is a distinct language within cultural community that characterise and attach its members, involving feelings and emotions. In short, affective experiences facilitate the bonding between consumer, other consumers, and the activity. The present study argues that affective brand experiences can also induce a bonding between the self and the brands. Thus, the following hypothesis is posited:

H5a – Affective brand experience has positive effects on brand self-connection.

As has been discussed, not only the recollection of sensations from the river rafting experience exists but also include emotional feelings (Arnould & Price, 1993). They show that having a communion with nature evoke participants' emotional feelings that will stay in their memories. Based on the finding, it is argued that affective brand experience induces

memories about the brand and that memories will stay and become part in the consumers' mind. Thus, the following hypothesis is posited:

H5b – Affective brand experience has positive effects on brand prominence.

Behavioural experience can be seen in shopping experience since it result in bodily experiences. A study by Sayre and Horne (1996) indicates that shopping experiences give meanings to consumers, which lead to higher attachment. As consumers spend significant resources (e.g. time) to shop, the more likely they become attach to the things they acquired. Similarly, this can occur not only to possessions but also to brands. Not only that, when there is a story behind shopping experience, it is more likely that meaning is embedded to the object (Sayre & Horne, 1996). Therefore, it can be argued that the more consumers engage in physical activities with the brand, the higher the probability that the brand will be incorporated into their self. Thus, the following hypothesis is posited:

H6a – Behavioural brand experience has positive effects on brand-self connection.

Increasing physical or bodily experience with a brand will evoke consumers' cognitive and affective responses. Sayre and Horne (1996) show that some of their informants exhibit pleasure and enjoyment from shopping experience. It has been discussed above that story on shopping experiences will help in providing meaning to the object or brand. Consumers put the story in their mind, which makes brands related to that story become more prominent. Thus, the following hypothesis is posited:

H6b – Behavioural brand experience has positive effects on brand prominence.

Consumers can obtain experiences with the brand from the marketing communication activities, for example through advertisement. Commonly advertisement contains prominent information and elements of brand (Smith & Yang, 2004). When consumers see the ad, they will automatically think and try to elaborate the ad's message. Accordingly intellectual brand experience occurs. However, it is argued that divergent ad increases the likelihood that consumers will think and elaborate the ad's message and try to achieve understanding and closure (Smith & Yang, 2004). They define divergent ads as ads that contain elements that are novel, different, or unusual in some way. Further they argue that when consumers process

divergent advertisements, they induce cognitive and affective responses about the advertisement, the brand or the context. Therefore, the action of processing the ad by elaborating and thinking about the ad can lead to the creation of link between consumer and the brand. However, Smith and Yang (2004) argue that only when the ad is relevant that a meaningful link between the consumer and the brand exists. Hence, it can be posited that intellectual brand experiences will evoke consumers' cognitive and affective responses toward the brand and create bonding. Thus, the following hypothesis is posited:

H7a – Intellectual brand experience has positive effects on brand-self connection.

As it has been discussed above, advertisements can evoke consumers' intellectual experience with the brand. When consumers process divergent advertisements, they produce more favourable cognitive and affective responses (Smith & Yang, 2004). Further, they also note that memory and retrieval of brand information is facilitated by divergent advertisements. Hence, inducing consumers' cognitive and affective responses as well as facilitating memory of the brand will make the brand more prominent. Therefore, it is argued that intellectual brand experience, which evoke consumers' to think and process brand information in the end will increase brand prominence. Thus, the following hypothesis is posited:

H7b – Intellectual brand experience has positive effects on brand prominence.

4.3.3 *Effect of Brand Responsiveness on Brand Attachment*

Besides familiarity, responsiveness is also foundational for attachment research. As has been stated by Hazan and Shaver (1994), familiarity and responsiveness influence the process in which an attachment figure is selected. A stream of research supports the notion that responsiveness is fundamental for attachment. For example, several studies on infant-caregiver relationships identify that infant attachment is being influenced by the responsiveness given by the caregiver (van Ijzendoorn, 1995; Raval *et al.*, 2001; Goldberg *et al.*, 1994; Pederson *et al.*, 1998).

Goldberg *et al.* (1994) study shows that responses from attachment figures to signals given by infants determine the patterns of attachment. A meta-analysis study supports that attachment figures' responsiveness play a role in determining attachment security (van Ijzendoorn, 1995).

Pederson *et al.* (1998) argue that maternal sensitivity, which includes the potential in effectively recognising and responding to the infant's signals, is a significant predictor of attachment security. Later study (Raval *et al.*, 2001) reinforces that greater responsiveness means greater attachment security. These studies unveil that responsiveness is one of the determinant of attachment. Based on these arguments, this study put brand responsiveness as one of the determinants of brand attachment.

As has been discussed in the previous chapter, brand responsiveness can be explained using the self-determination theory. Brands responsiveness is conceptualised as the fulfilment of three basic psychological needs: autonomy, relatedness and competence (Deci & Ryan, 2000; Thomson, 2006; La Guardia & Patrick, 2008). These three basic psychological needs are fundamental considering that inability to captivate it will halt the development and even the continuation of oneself (Ryan & Deci, 2000). In short, when a brand is able to respond in fulfilling these need satisfactions, that brand will play a prominent role in the consumer's life.

Among adults, relationships are based not only on differentiation but also exchange supports to each other, and in order for the relationships to function; it is prominent for relational partner to reinforce the other's sense of autonomy (La Guardia *et al.*, 2000). Autonomy inclines toward self-regulating action, which helps individuals achieving a more effective self-maintenance by organising their personal actions complying with their collection of needs and capacities (Deci & Ryan, 2000).

Feelings of autonomy, across developmental phases in a person's life, act as a foundation for effective behavioural regulation (Deci & Ryan, 2000). An individual feels a sense of autonomy when his/her relational partner put efforts in comprehending with that individual's perspectives, interests, and preferences as well as supporting and acknowledging to that individual's initiatives and exploration (La Guardia & Patrick, 2008).

Pederson *et al.* (1998), using mother-infant relationship in their study, show that autonomy is an important predictor of attachment security. They found that autonomy predicts individual's attachment security. Later researches (Patrick *et al.*, 2007; La Guardia *et al.*, 2000) also support that the need for autonomy is prominent in explaining attachment. Research in the context of human brands (Thomson, 2006) also shows that when brands are able to support the feelings of consumers' self-governance and self-expression, stronger attachments are

likely to occur. Building on these findings, it is posited that the extent that a brand can fulfil consumers' sense of autonomy will influence the extent that the brand will be incorporated in their self. Thus, the following hypothesis is posited:

H8a – Brand responsiveness in terms of fulfilling a sense of autonomy has positive effects on brand-self connection.

As reported by La Guardia *et al.* (2000), using brand that provides a sense of autonomy will induce feelings of volition, agency and initiative. These positive feelings will be kept in consumers' mind. Further, it is also likely that when a brand is able to provide feelings of self-governance and self-expression (Thomson, 2006), consumers may put their thoughts and feelings on the brand in their memories. Over a period of time, the brand that provides sense of autonomy will be prominent. Thus, the following hypothesis is posited:

H8b – Brand responsiveness in terms of fulfilling a sense of autonomy has positive effects on brand prominence.

People are social creatures, which exhibit a propensity toward connectedness and this projection of connectedness is beyond the propensity to protect and care for their generation (Deci & Ryan, 2000). Numerous social activities, which magnify the level of affectionate involvement, are closely associated with connectedness or relatedness (Reis *et al.*, 2000). According to Deci and Ryan (2000), the need for relatedness has the ability for safeguarding the social organisation bonding and providing effective group knowledge transfer through internalisation.

La Guardia and Patrick (2008) note that individual's urge for relatedness can be conveyed when the relational partner exhibit attention to, engage in, and care towards that individual by providing environment full of warmth and love. Relatedness is found to be the strongest out of the three basic psychological needs to predict individual's attachment variables (La Guardia *et al.*, 2000). In accordance with it, Patrick *et al.* (2007) also found that need for relatedness to be the strongest out of the three in explaining attachment. Thomson (2006) notes that strong attachments between consumers and brands will likely to occur based on the ability of brands to fulfil consumers' feelings for intimacy and closeness. The greater these two feelings provided by a brand, the higher the likelihood that a connection between

consumers' self and a particular brand will likely to occur. Thus, the following hypothesis is posited:

H9a – Brand responsiveness in terms of fulfilling a sense of relatedness has positive effects on brand-self connection.

Satisfying the need of relatedness is found to exhibit feelings of cared for by and connected with another (La Guardia *et al.*, 2000). Moreover, consumers' feelings for closeness and intimacy are fulfilled (Thomson, 2006). Compiling on these findings, it is predicted that the ability of the brand to satisfy the need of relatedness will increase the brand's level of importance within consumers' mind. Thus, the following hypothesis is posited:

H9b – Brand responsiveness in terms of fulfilling a sense of relatedness has positive effects on brand prominence.

Individuals' needs for competence are likely to enhance activities that are particularly related to social interaction since they will experience satisfaction from learning for themselves (Deci & Ryan, 2000). According to them, individuals in order to be adaptive and flexible to the changing environment within social groups contend for competence. Individual's need for competence can be fulfilled when the relational partner accommodate that individual's framework and expectations positively, fairly and persistently by providing prominent ground to deal optimally with challenges (La Guardia & Patrick, 2008).

Nevertheless, La Guardia *et al.* (2000) argue that effects of dispatching a sense of competence as a way to respond through efficacy to attachment security may be unequivocal. According to them, although individuals are more likely to develop attachment with relational partners that provide them with a sense of competence, individuals feel that competence is not their principle goal in building relationship.

Research has shown that competence predicts attachment security, however competence is found to be the weakest predictor of attachment variables among the three basic psychological needs (La Guardia *et al.*, 2000). Subsequently, Patrick *et al.* (2007) found that need for competence and autonomy have a smaller magnitude in explaining attachment rather than need for relatedness. Although they found that in predicting individual well-being (self-

esteem, positive affect, and vitality) competence is the most consistent compared to autonomy and relatedness.

Further, in a study about brand (Thomson, 2006), it has been supported that consumers can become strongly attached to brands if their sense of autonomy and relatedness are enhanced while not restraining their sense of competence. However, Celsi *et al.* (1993) found that consumers' aspiration for own satisfaction and social status through recognition of self-competence or mastery are prominent to the bonding between consumers with sky diving activities. Consumers' motivation to carry on the activities depends on the feelings of achieving a sense of competence. Hence, the present study posited that when a brand is able to support consumers' sense of mastery or self-efficacy, it is likely that the link between the brand and the self will occur. Thus, the following hypothesis is posited:

H10a – Brand responsiveness in terms of fulfilling a sense of competence has positive effects on brand-self connection.

Further, the present study argues that by satisfying consumers' need for competence, positive thoughts and feelings regarding the brand will be available in the consumers' mind. Whenever consumers are satisfied from others recognition of their self-competence (Celsi *et al.*, 1993), positive thoughts and feelings are stored in their memory. Later, this will increase the saliency of the brand in consumers' mind. Thus the following hypothesis is posited:

H10b – Brand responsiveness in terms of fulfilling a sense of competence has positive effects on brand prominence.

4.3.4 *Effect of Brand Attachment on Brand Loyalty*

The main focus on consumer-brand relationships construct in this study is brand attachment. Brand attachment has been posited as a salient concept in explaining higher-level consumers' behaviours that reflect the use of significant resources and commitment to the brand (Park & MacInnis, 2006). It is even argued to be more plausible than attitude in predicting higher-level behaviours (Thomson *et al.*, 2005; Park *et al.*, 2010).

Brand loyalty has been defined as “a deeply held commitment to rebuy or repatronize a preferred product/service consistently in the future, thereby causing repetitive same-brand or same brand-set purchasing, despite situational influences and marketing efforts having the potential to cause switching behavior” (Oliver, 1999, p.34). From the definition, brand loyalty reflects consumers’ commitment for a particular brand. As has been discussed above, brand attachment profoundly explains consumers’ behaviours that reflect commitment to the brand. Hence, brand attachment may predict brand loyalty.

Limited research has examined the relationship between emotional brand attachment and brand loyalty. Thomson *et al.* (2005) in a research developing a scale to measure emotional brand attachment show that it predicts brand loyalty. Later in the retailing context, Vlachos *et al.* (2010) found emotional attachment between consumer and firm to be a strong positive determinant of positive word of mouth and loyalty. Another study in the retailing context (Orth *et al.*, 2010) also shows that emotional attachment has a significant positive effect on brand loyalty. However, these studies only illustrate that brand loyalty is predicted by emotional attachment.

The concept of brand attachment has evolved from capturing emotions to capturing both emotions and cognitions. Park *et al.* (2010) conceptualise brand attachment to foster brand-self connection and brand prominence. Brand self-connection reflects the bond linking the self and the brand, whereas brand prominence reflects the salience of the bond in consumers’ mind. They show that brand attachment, which is represented by brand-self connection and brand prominence, predicts actual purchase, purchase share and need share.

Escalas (2004) indicates that brand-self connection is positively associated with attitudes toward the brand and behavioural intentions. Another study (Moore & Homer, 2008) suggests that brand-self connection positively influence brand attitude. These studies hint that consumers develop favourable attitudes and behaviours with brands that already incorporated in their self-concept. Consumers are predisposed to respond positively and behave more consistently toward a brand that supports them in achieving self-identity goals (Escalas, 2004). Thus, the following hypothesis is posited:

H11 – Brand-self connection has positive effects on brand loyalty.

Subsequently, over time brands that have been incorporated into consumers' self-concept will lead to positive memories, which include thoughts and feelings toward the brand. These positive memories increase consumers' perceived ease and frequency that will guide consumers in developing positive attitudes and behaviours toward the brand. Thus, the following hypothesis is posited:

H12 – Brand prominence has positive effects on brand loyalty.

4.3.5 *Mediating Effect of Brand Attachment on the Relationship between Self-Congruence, Brand Experience, Brand Responsiveness, and Brand Loyalty*

A highly prominent topic in marketing is about comprehending the formation of relationships that lead to loyalty between consumer and brands (Keller, 2012). Various studies suggest that brand loyalty can be formed through factors, such as: self-congruence (Kressman *et al.*, 2006) and brand experience (Brakus *et al.*, 2009). However, several studies also indicate that these factors indirectly influence brand loyalty through mediation process. For example, in the hotel and restaurant context, it has been shown that consumer satisfaction partially mediates the relationship between ideal self-congruence and brand loyalty (Nam *et al.*, 2011).

Kressmann *et al.* (2006), studying automobile industry, suggest that the power of the linkage between self-congruence and brand loyalty is the same when the relationship is mediated by functional congruity and brand relationship quality. In retailing context, Vlachos *et al.* (2010) consider emotional attachment as a major driver of loyalty where consumer-firm emotional attachment is found to fully mediate the relationships between gratifying, enriching, and enabling the self with loyalty. Even store-evoked affect is found to influence brand loyalty through the mediation of satisfaction and attachment (Orth *et al.*, 2010). Based on these streams of research, brand attachment plays a prominent role in building brand loyalty.

Building intimate bonding with a given brand should solidify strong and lasting relationships between the brand and consumers (Moore & Homer, 2008). The extent that consumers have incorporated brands into their self-concept increase the tendency of trial, purchase and higher willingness to pay, which indicates loyalty to the brand (Escalas, 2004). These studies underscore the importance of building connection among consumers and brands to achieve loyalty. Accordingly, this study proposed that consumers would develop attachment toward

brands before exhibiting favourable attitudes and behaviours toward the brand. Moore and Homer (2008) show that stronger, more persistent and more confident consumers' attitude is being fostered by brand attachment. Thus, the following hypothesis is posited:

H11-12 – Brand attachment mediates the relationship between self-congruence, brand experience, brand responsiveness, and brand loyalty.

4.3.6 Moderating Effect of Attachment Style

Brand attachment and attachment style are two distinct concepts (Mende & Bolton, 2011). Brand attachment refers to the power of the bond linking the self with the brand, where heavy and susceptible mental representation that comprises thoughts and feelings about the brand and the relationship between brand and the self, exemplified the bond, whereas attachment style refers to the results from previous attachment experiences which consist of systematic pattern of relational expectations, emotions, and behaviours within a person. The present study proposed that each and every consumer has his/her own attachment style based on previous attachment experiences. This means consumers are heterogeneous and it may affect the relationship between brand attachment and its antecedents.

Research has shown that initial attachment relationships during childhood with caregivers will determine future attachment relationships (Bartholomew, 1990; Collins & Read, 1990). Individual's working models, including one's belief and expectations about the self and others (Bartholomew, 1990), are said to be prominent in determining attachment of other relationships (Collins & Read, 1990). As Bowlby (1973) has stated, these working models, based on their past relationships, will be the basis for perceptions, expectations, and behaviours for the next relationships. In addition, these working models will guide individual's style of emotional regulation and social communication (Bartholomew, 1990). Collins and Read (1990) find evidence that differences in individual's working models of self are associated with social relationship, and that will act as a guide for the behaviours in social interactions. They also argue that these working models can be used to comprehend the social world by interpreting and explaining the behaviours of others. Individuals' attachment style based on previous attachment experiences since early childhood with caregivers will play a salient role in determining future relationships because they have their own working models. These working models will guide their behaviours during social encounters. Accordingly, the

relationship between consumers and brands may be influenced by attachment style. Research shows that attachment style explains a person's willingness to form a bond with his/her favourite TV personality (Cole & Leets, 1999). Furthermore, it is also known that attachment style is associated with reactions to romantic relationships dissolution (Davis *et al.*, 2003).

Several researchers in the marketing field have pointed out the importance of consumer's attachment style. Attachment style is found to play a salient role in consumer-brand relationships (Thomson & Johnson, 2001). In a study of service providers, Thomson & Johnson (2006) show that attachment style can be a predictor of successful relationships between brands and service providers. Another study in business-to-business relationships, found that attachment style is used as a basis of consumer segmentation for bonding with business partner (Paulssen, 2009). Meanwhile, purchase likelihood, brand choice and brand attachment is influenced by the differences in attachment style and brand personality (Swaminathan *et al.*, 2009). Later, attachment style also plays a salient role in explaining differences in consumer's perception in terms of satisfaction, trust, and affective commitment (Mende & Bolton, 2011). Thus, the following hypothesis is posited:

H13a-h – Consumers' attachment style will moderate the relationships between self-congruence, brand experience, brand responsiveness, and brand attachment as well as the relationship between brand attachment and brand loyalty.

4.4 Chapter Summary

This chapter starts from presenting the research model (Figure 4.1 and Figure 4.2). According to the research model, the dependent variable in this study is brand attachment. It has been noted that understanding the formation of brand attachment and how it guides consumers in becoming loyal toward a particular brand have been a highly importance topic in marketing (Park *et al.* 2010; Keller, 2012). Brand attachment has been conceptualised to foster brand-self connection and brand prominence (Park *et al.*, 2010). The present study focuses on psychological constructs especially the one that is associated to the self in proposing the antecedents of brand attachment. Three variables, based on previous literature (e.g. Malär *et al.*, 2011; Thomson, 2006; Kleine & Baker, 2004; Brakus *et al.*, 2009), are proposed as the antecedents of brand attachment, they are: self-congruence, brand experience, and brand responsiveness.

H1-H3 concerns the relationships between self-congruence and brand attachment. Malär *et al.* (2011) argue that actual and ideal self-congruence positively affects emotional brand attachment. It is posited in this study that self-congruence can positively influence brand attachment. Higher level of self-congruence means stronger brand attachment. There are three dimensions of self-congruence used in this study: (1) actual self-congruence, (2) ideal self-congruence, and (3) social self-congruence.

H4-H7 predicts the relationship between brand experience and brand attachment. Brand experience has been conceptualised by Brakus *et al.* (2009) to consist four dimensions (sensory, affective, behavioural and intellectual). In this study, it is proposed that brand experience positively influence brand attachment. Higher experience with the brand is likely to increase the likelihood of consumers incorporating the brand into their 'self' and increases the saliency of the brand in their mind.

Association between brand responsiveness and brand attachment is posited in H8-H10. Brand responsiveness here refers to the ability of the brand to fulfil three basic psychological needs (Thomson, 2006), which are: (1) autonomy, (2) relatedness, and (3) competence. If the brand is able to support consumers' feelings of autonomy, relatedness, and competence, it is more likely that strong attachment with the brand will occur.

Consequence of brand attachment, which is brand loyalty, is proposed in H11-H12. As Keller (2012) notes that comprehending the formation of relationships that lead to loyalty between consumer and brands is a highly prominent topic in marketing. Subsequently, the mediating role of brand attachment will also be discussed. It is proposed that brand attachment plays a prominent role in building brand loyalty.

H13 concerns the moderating effect of attachment style. A stream of research has noted the importance of attachment style (e.g. Paulssen, 2009). As has been discussed, attachment style falls under two dimensions: anxiety and avoidance. The argument to put attachment style as one of the moderating variables is the heterogeneity of consumers. Consumers have their own attachment style that they carry from previous attachment experiences. Research in psychology (e.g. Brennan *et al.*, 1998; Collins & Read, 1990) identify that past attachment experiences will determine future relationships. In addition, research in marketing (e.g. Thomson & Johnson, 2006; Swaminathan *et al.*, 2009; Mende & Bolton, 2011) has also

identifies the prominent role of attachment style in predicting consumer's relationships with the brand. Consumers are heterogeneous and their relationships with brands will also be different. The present study argues that psychological differences capture by attachment style can offer a deeper understanding on the formation of brand attachment.

CHAPTER 5

FINDINGS OF THE PRELIMINARY STUDY

5.1 Introduction

As has been discussed in the previous chapter, this study's research model is derived from the literature. Based on existing literature, three constructs have been identified as the antecedents of brand attachment: (1) self-congruence, (2) brand experience, and (3) brand responsiveness, whereas one construct has been identified as the consequence of brand attachment: brand loyalty. These antecedents and consequence of brand attachment are derived from theories. However, it may be possible that there are other constructs that are able to act as drivers and outcomes of brand attachment. Therefore, in order to make the research model more comprehensive, this study intends to investigate additional constructs that can serve as the determinants and outcomes of brand attachment.

The chapter starts with the introduction on the objective of the preliminary study and then moves onto the research design. Within the research design, the discussion on the instrument, reliability and validity, sample, and the procedure is presented. It continues with the analysis of the data and findings.

5.2 Research Design

The research design chosen for the preliminary study is an exploratory research approach. It is argued that the typical purpose of conducting exploratory research is to obtain ideas and insights (Churchill & Iacobucci, 2004). Exploratory study can reduce the probability of an inadequate, incorrect, or misleading set of research objectives and act as vital first step to a more rigorous, conclusive, confirmatory research (Zikmund & Babin, 2009). Further, exploratory or qualitative research can be used to identify variables that should be included in the research and to generate research hypotheses (Malhotra, 2010).

The objective of this exploratory study is to gather insights on the development of consumer's attachment toward brands and consumers' behaviours as a result of that attachment. As has been discussed previously, the research model is developed from the literature review. In

order to make it more thorough and rigorous, the findings of the exploratory study will be used to validate and refine the research model.

5.2.1 Instrument

The qualitative research method that was used in this study is the semi-structured interviews together with projective techniques using sentence completion. Semi-structured interviews were chosen because it has been argued that interviews are able to uncover greater depth of insight compared to focus group (Malhotra, 2010). Moreover, it has been noted that it is more appropriate to use interviews for several accounts (Keegan, 2009), such as:

1. Sensitive or socially taboo.

There are several topics (e.g. in the context where personal preferences are likely to be varied) not suitable for group discussions, because of various considerations, such as norms and beliefs.

2. Require a detail history.

Some research topics need the sole focus of the participant, which s/he can explore and recall in detail.

3. Try to explore other communication.

It is easier to explore by gauging the participant's immediate reaction, without being contaminated or distracted by the opinions of others.

4. Need to express more private emotions and behaviours.

With an interview, there is only the interviewer and the participant; therefore, misunderstandings in the communication or unusual interpretations can be easily noticed.

5. Practicality issue.

If participants are dispersed, it will be harder to gather them into a group; therefore, an interview is used to handle this problem.

6. In a particular context.

Participants can feel more comfortable being interviewed in a familiar environment (e.g. home) and this can provide rich contextual information.

Compared to focus groups, interviews are able to attribute directly to the responses from the respondent (Malhotra, 2010). Malhotra notes that it is generally difficult to determine which participant made a particular response in focus groups. Accordingly Keegan (2009) notes that

there are three main considerations in not choosing focus group discussion, the three considerations are:

1. The need of detail histories.
2. The issue of practicality and confidentiality.
3. The need to observe in a particular context.

In addition to the reasons above, semi-structured interviews were chosen over focus group discussion in this research because of social distortions. Social distortions always occur in consumer research, and focus groups tend to stimulate self-presentational face issues which motivate respondents to consciously modify responses in order to impress, intimidate, or please others (Rook, 2006).

Semi-structured interviews protocol, which also contained sentence completion activity, was designed (see Appendix 1). The questions in the semi-structured interviews were designed to obtain several objectives: (1) explore consumers' understanding and perspective on the term "attachment", (2) explore consumers' attachment with brand, (3) investigate how consumers develop attachment with the brand and (4) investigate consumers' behavioural actions from having attachment with the brand. In order to achieve these objectives, the construction of the semi-structured interviews was divided into four sections.

The first section was a warm-up session. This session's objective was to build rapport with the interviewee. According to Oppenheim (1992), a right level of rapport will keep the interviewee talking. Further, the interviewer started to explore attachment from the interviewee's perspective. The second section was intended to delve into the interviewee relationship with brand. Continuing to the third section and fourth section, the interviewer attempted to retrieve factors that influence the development of the interviewee attachment to the brand and the behavioural actions resulted from it. The list of questions was being used as guidelines and not all the questions were asked to the interviewee, since each sessions resulted different responses from the interviewee.

In conjunction with the semi-structured interviews, sentence completion, part of projective techniques, was used. Malhotra (2010) notes the views that regard qualitative techniques as mutually exclusive should be reconsidered on the account that using a combination of various qualitative techniques can yield valuable information. Further, the variation in theoretical and

topical curiosity in brand meanings and relationships, and also in consumers' emotions, desires and motivations has increased the motivation of using projective methods (Rook, 2006). Using projective techniques can help a researcher to overcome awareness barriers, irrationality barriers, inadmissibility barriers, self-incrimination barriers, and politeness barriers (Oppenheim, 1992). In addition, Malhotra (2010) indicates that if the objective of the exploratory research is to gain initial insights and understanding, then using projective techniques is appropriate.

Based on the arguments above, projective techniques were included as an addition to this exploratory research because the objective is to find insights in order to identify variables that should be included in the model. Moreover, the topic of the research itself is about consumers' relationships with brands. Projective techniques include dubious instruments that will stimulate the collection of respondents' creative responses (Soley & Smith, 2008). In a way, projective techniques strive to draw out respondents' unconscious motivations and also help when respondents are incapable of answering to formal questions because of highly sensitive and personal topics (Morrison *et al.*, 2002).

Rook (2006) argues that projective techniques display greater task variety and research design compared to other qualitative methods such as focus groups and depth interviews, even ethnographic fieldwork. Projective techniques will require a person to describe, expand on, or build a narrative around applying a vague stimulus (Churchill & Iacobucci, 2004). Projective techniques depend on indirect queries by framing queries in terms of imaginary situations or other people that elicit more symbolic, metaphorical and aesthetic data, which clearly a direct concern of marketers with responsibilities in communication, product design and brand positioning (Rook, 2006).

There are several projective techniques that can be used, such as word-associations, sentence completion, and so forth. The technique within projective techniques that was chosen in this research is sentence completion. Respondents were asked to use the first word or phrase that comes to their mind in completing stimulus given in incomplete sentences (Malhotra, 2010). Moreover, he indicates that the benefit of sentence completion over other projective techniques (e.g. word association) is in the use of a more directed stimulus.

The sentence completion activity itself was put at the end of the semi-structured interviews for several reasons. First, the sentence completion activity was only used as an additional technique to probe into the respondents' feelings and thoughts, which were not visible in the semi-structured interviews. Second, if it was put at the very beginning of the interview, the rapport between the interviewer and interviewee has yet to be established. Third, if it is put in between the interview session, it may distract the flow of the interview. The list of questions in the sentence completion activity can be seen in Appendix 2.

5.2.2 Issues of Reliability and Validity

In order to achieve rigour in this exploratory research, the issues of reliability and validity should be addressed. Amidst qualitative research, reliability and validity are always a concern. Qualitative researcher has interchanged the terms 'reliability' and 'validity' with equivalent term, such as 'credibility', 'transferability', and 'dependability' (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). However, there is a concern that the introduction of this aligned terminology may marginalise qualitative inquiry from predominant science and scientific legitimacy. Therefore, in qualitative research the terms 'reliability' and 'validity' remain relevant and should be preserved (Morse *et al.*, 2002). Reliability in qualitative research refers to whether the research findings are consistent or not, whereas validity refers to the authenticity and preciseness of the assertion (Kvale, 1996).

Morse *et al.* (2002) mention several strategies to ensure reliability and validity and they are supposed to be included in the qualitative research process, rather than on the completion of the project. These strategies are as follows:

1. Investigator responsiveness.

The investigator should remain open, use sensitivity, creativity and insight, and be willing to relinquish any ideas, because several things (e.g. overly adhering to instructions rather than listening to data) may influence the attainment of optimal reliability and validity.

2. Methodological coherence.

Coherence is essential in order to make sure of the congruity between the research question and the components of the method.

3. Appropriate sample.

The sample should consist of people who best represent or have knowledge of the research topic.

4. Collecting and analysing data concurrently.

Data are supposed to be systematically checked, while maintaining focus and the fit of data with the conceptual work of analysis, as well as monitoring the interpretation.

5. Thinking theoretically.

All new ideas that arise from the data are supposed to be verified by constantly checking and rechecking, without making cognitive leaps.

6. Theory development.

Theory is developed through two mechanisms: (1) as an outcome of the research process, and (2) as a template for comparison and further development of the theory.

Reliability in reporting interviews or focus groups can be obtained (Silverman, 2011) through: (1) pre-testing an interview schedule, (2) audio recording all interactions, (3) meticulously transcribing the audio recording accordingly to the needs of reliable analysis, and (4) displaying long extracts of data in the research report. Following this, specific design tactics were employed in the present study to make sure the reliability and validity of the semi-structured interviews and sentence completion. First, the questions being used are adapted from previous studies (e.g. Grisaffe & Nguyen, 2011; Fournier, 1998). Second, the list of questions was handed to colleagues for inputs and suggestions. Third, several mock interviews were held before the actual interviews took place. Fourth, all of the interview sessions were audio recorded from the beginning to the end of the sessions. Fourth, one interview session has been chosen and the transcription is being displayed (see Appendix 4).

5.2.3 *Sample*

Two broad classifications of sampling techniques are probability sampling and nonprobability sampling (Malhotra, 2010; Churchill & Iacobucci, 2004). This study used nonprobability sampling as the sampling technique for the qualitative study. According to Churchill and Iacobucci (2004), using nonprobability sampling means that it is not possible to estimate the probability that any population element will be included in the sample; therefore, it is not possible to ensure that the sample is representative of the population. Nonprobability sampling depends heavily on researcher's personal judgment but it may still concede good estimates of a population characteristic (Malhotra, 2010).

Nonprobability sampling can be categorised into four types of sampling: (1) convenience sampling, (2) judgmental sampling/purposive sampling, (3) quota sampling, and (4) snowball sampling (Malhotra, 2010; Churchill & Iacobucci, 2004). Judgmental or purposive sampling together with snowball sampling was used in this study. According to Malhotra (2010), judgmental sampling can be considered as another form of convenience sampling, in which the researcher's judgments play a role in selecting the sample elements. The elements are handpicked because it is predicted that the research purpose will be served by these samples (Churchill & Iacobucci, 2004). Snowball sampling is a nonprobability sampling technique which based on the referrals or information provided by the initial respondents, subsequent respondents are selected (Malhotra, 2010).

The criterion for the judgmental sampling chosen for this research is British or UK national. The reason for choosing British or UK national as a criterion was to overcome language barriers. It was to make sure that the respondents are able to understand the questions being asked. During the interview, the interviewer tried to probe for brands that the interviewee has attachment to. In order to do so, the respondents were asked to mention their favourite brands. The attempt was not without difficulties and some of the respondents struggled. However, this was handled by probing through their stories.

After the interview session finished, using snowball sampling, the respondent was being asked whether he/she is able to give any reference or information on other people that he/she knows which might be interested to participate in the study. According to Kvale (1996) in determining the number of respondents to participate in the interview, it is good practice to use 15 respondents plus/minus 10. Therefore the range of a good sample for the interview is from 5 to 25 respondents. For this research, 12 respondents, which are British or UK national, were recruited for the semi-structured interviews.

5.2.4 Procedure

Prior to the data collection, the research instrument was sent to Oxford Brookes University Research Ethics Committee for review and approval. Approval was needed from the Research Ethics Committee because it involves human participation. Subsequent to the approval from Oxford Brookes University Research Ethics Committee, the data collection started. The

invitation letters, together with the participant information sheet for the semi-structured interviews, were sent to future possible respondents electronically. The participant information sheet contains the following: project title and aims of the research, explanation on how will the research operates, confidentiality issues, possible risks and benefits, and contact details.

The purpose of this research and explanation on why the respondents have been invited are clearly explained in the participant information sheet. Further, to encourage respondents to participate, explanation on the detail of how the research operates is given. In addition, the researcher emphasised confidentiality and privacy of respondents. Finally, the information about the researcher's affiliation and status in the Marketing Department, Faculty of Business, Oxford Brookes University is provided to increase credibility of the researcher and the study. In the invitation letter, if the person agrees to participate, s/he is asked to respond to the invitation either through email or contacting the researcher directly. Later, the respondent and researcher arranged the time and place of the semi-structured interviews based on mutual arrangements.

At the time of the interview, before it began, a one-page informed consent sheet was shown to the informants. The informed consent sheet contains respondent's agreement to participate in the study, being audio recorded, and the use of anonymised quotes in publications. After signing the consent sheet, the researcher asked whether the respondent has any further questions about the participant information sheet. Then the participants are provided with timeline and guidelines.

5.3 Demographic Profile of the Sample

The field study was conducted in Oxford, United Kingdom between August 2012 and October 2012. As much as twelve interviewees were gathered and interviewed within that time frame. All of them signed the consent form and agreed to be audio recorded before the start of the interview sessions. On average, the interview sessions lasted for around 45 minutes. At the end of the sessions, all interviewees were asked to fill in the information questions form.

Based on the profile, the demographic characteristics of the interviewees, apart from all of them being either British or UK national, are: 7 males (58.33%) and 5 females (41.67%). The age ranges from 20 (the youngest) up until 51 (the oldest). In terms of their occupation, 7

(58.33%) interviewees identify themselves as students and 5 (41.67%) interviewees identify their occupation as restaurant owner, consultant, lecturer, and contracted researcher. In terms of their highest qualification and income, it ranges from A-level up to Master's degree and ranges from up to £10,000 until £40,001 and over.

From the sessions, there were diverse categories of brand being mentioned. The brands mentioned were restaurants (e.g. McDonalds), supermarkets (e.g. Waitrose), clothing (e.g. Superdry), cars (e.g. Mercedes Benz), electronics (e.g. Apple), software programmes (e.g. Microsoft), department stores (e.g. John Lewis), sports equipment (e.g. Speedo), magazines (e.g. National Geographic), shoes (e.g. Clarks), food and beverages (e.g. Innocent).

5.4 Analysis of the Data

As has been mentioned above, the objective of the preliminary study is to identify additional constructs fit in to be the antecedents and consequences of brand attachment. The semi-structured interviews and sentence completion activity have been designed to (1) explore consumers' understanding and perspective on the term "attachment", (2) investigate on how consumers develop attachment with the brand and (3) investigate on consumers' behavioural actions from having attachment with the brand.

Thematic analysis was employed to analyse the text data. Thematic analysis is used to identify, analyse, and report themes inside the data (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Thematic analysis is regarded as appropriate because the objective of this exploratory study is to identify constructs in order to make the research model more comprehensive. Following Braun and Clarke (2006), the analysis was carried out in six steps: (1) familiarising with the data, (2) generating initial codes, (3) searching for themes, (4) reviewing themes, (5) defining and naming themes, and (6) producing the report.

5.4.1. Attachment

At the beginning, respondents were asked to describe their own perceptions on attachment. Respondents were being asked with the question: "What comes to your mind when you hear the word 'attachment'?" A thematic analysis of the text data indicated that the respondents had different conceptions of attachment; however there are similarities as well and it falls

under three main concepts. The first concept is emotional attachment. Respondents declared that their attachment to another person, or in an interpersonal relationship contain emotions.

“...whereas a person, maybe it might be emotional. It might be more because they support me.” (Female, 23)

“Relationships with people ...for example, I have strong attachment with my parents ...when you are strongly attached to someone you feel kind of lonely and sad when they are gone...it’s more of an emotional attachment really.” (Male, 20)

Respondents also reported that their attachment to someone or something involves emotions as well. Fournier (1998) indicates that attachment, apart from interpersonal relationships, is also evident in the relationships between consumer and brand. Brand attachment has been conceptualised to include passion, affection and connection toward the brand (Thomson *et al.*, 2005).

“Just having a particular feeling...sort of particular connection with whatever in question really, so whether it’s an emotional attachment or sort of physical attachment as well.” (Male, 23)

“Attachment? From like an emotional connection...hmm...some kind of...you feel close, you feel connected...you feel drawn to something.” (Male, 41)

“The first thing comes to my head is an emotional attachment. Because it might be something you feel strongly towards or other that you’re particularly passionate about ...for example, [you heard a story about] Nike child exploitation in the Far East, and because you like that brand, and because you’re attached to it, you prepared to ignore that and continue to buy that brand.” (Male, 24)

Complementing the conceptualisation of brand attachment reflecting emotional bonding (passion, affection, and connection), Park *et al.* (2010) conceptualised brand attachment which includes *brand-self connection* and *brand prominence*. The emotions will automatically exist within consumers’ mind when they have a connection between their ‘self’ and the brand or what is being named brand-self connection (Park *et al.*, 2010). Based on the findings, respondents reported that attachment reflects *brand-self connection*, since they consider attachment to reflect the connection between their self and someone or something (e.g. brand).

“How do I describe attachment? Maybe being connected to something...wanted to be part of your life or around you...like as close as possible.” (Female, 23)

“Like identity, commitment, an emotional, you know ...so the sense of attachment is very much rooted in...the sense of who you are in particular context, a particular relationship, identification, and emotional connectivity to a particular object...” (Male, 29)

“...it is part of who I am ...that’s just part of my identity ...so for me it’s very much link of who I am. So for me to answer your question, this whole idea about attachment, what it means to me, if I’m attached to...hmm...identity rich sources of experience which are incredibly meaningful to me that I’m attached to in the past.” (Male, 51)

“For me that [Innocent] is the kind of food that I really like, it’s the food that I kind of connect with, and it feels healthy.” (Female, 22a)

In line with the conceptualisation of brand attachment according to Park *et al.* (2010), respondents also reported the notion of *brand prominence*, which displays the salience of the bond between consumers’ self and the brand through perceived ease and frequency brought into the consumer’s mind.

“It depends on the situation of what we’re talking about, a person or an inanimate object ...where for an object, may be because of its practical use.” (Female, 23)

“In terms of brand attachment, it is associated with how often you encounter that brand.” (Male, 20)

“Attachment is some...you know when you’re attached to someone you can’t live without something or someone. That’s what attachment is for me. Like my family, my wife, Billy [the dog], my mother, my mother’s cooking. I can’t live without that...Xbox, phone, things that I rely on...every day.” (Male, 31)

As reflected in the findings, respondents consider attachment towards something (e.g. brand) means being connected or associated with it. Emotions are embedded in the connections or relationships.

5.4.2. *Antecedents of Brand Attachment*

Based on the literature, the research model puts forward three constructs as the antecedents of brand attachment. These three constructs are: *self-congruence*, *brand experience*, and *brand*

responsiveness. Based on the findings of the exploratory study, respondents also reported these three constructs as the determinants of their attachment toward brands.

Self-Congruence

Sirgy (1982) identifies that the fit between the consumers' self and the product's image refers to self-congruence. There are several forms of self-congruence: actual self-congruence, ideal self-congruence, and social self-congruence (Sirgy, 1982). Actual self-congruence refers to the fit between the actual self and the product/brand's image or personality, ideal self-congruence refers to the perceived fit of the ideal self and the product/brand's image or personality, whereas social self-congruence refers to the fit between social self and the product/brand's image or personality (Aaker, 1999; Sirgy, 1982). Respondents reported that they become attached to a brand because it is similar with who they really are.

“But it [Newcastle United] is just something that you grow up with and it's an identity I supposed. Because it shows that you're proud of where you come from [Newcastle].” (Male, 24)

Respondents find that they became attached to the brand because, in a sense, the brand reflects who they are (e.g. preference, personality and ideology). On the example below, a female respondent stated that she and her sister are both health conscious, which is similar to the brand.

“Because I guess, I associate [Innocent] with, [my sister and I] both quite health conscious. And I think she is probably slightly more health conscious than me.” (Female, 22a)

The brand shows personalities (e.g. humorous) that are more or less identical towards her actual or current self.

“I think they [Innocent] are funny, they are quirky. You get a little bit of things off the back, all the funny jokes or whatever. I like that weirdness, I feel like I have a bit of bizarre not personality but humour, very silly humour that I really can relate to.” (Female, 22a)

“And I also identify with the...perhaps the western ideology that underpins it [National Geographic]...the western environmental ideology behind it, in particular. I identify strongly with that. ...I supposed it [National Geographic] is a statement about

my identity ...it's an extension of who I am. It's a statement about myself as much as anything else. Particularly when I'm reading it in public." (Male, 51)

"They [M&S] look after their customers, at least that's my perceptions. In a way I guess, I like...I think I'm a good friend. So in comparison, they look after their customers, I will look after my friends. They've high quality things in their shops. And I don't like compromising...I don't like shabby things. When I'm doing a piece of work, it has to be perfect. ...They care about high standards...they don't like things that is half done. That's quite similar with me." (Female, 23)

Respondents stated that when they are using the brand, they are conveying to other people their actual identity (who they really are). Apart from that, one of the reasons they became attached to a particular brand is because of ideal self-congruence. Just as a male respondent indicated that the reason he is attached to a particular brand is because he feels that the brand reflects who he really is (*actual self-congruence*), it is also because the brand projects his intention to who he would like to be (*ideal self-congruence*).

"When I was 11 or 12. If you were a member of the school's swimming team, you bought Speedo swimming trunks, and that was the big brand. There were others around at that time, but that's the big one that you would buy. And Mark Spitz, it was in the 1970s, he was a fantastic swimmer, he wore Speedo swimming trunks as well. As little kid, sort of 11 or 12, it would be brilliant to put a pair in order to be like Mark Spitz." (Male, 51)

Other respondents also stated that they chose a brand or become attached to a brand because of the aspiration of who s/he would like to be in the future.

"So, I would say like...that's kind how I feel about a brand like Fat Face maybe. Which is probably like, in the last few years, I've really begun to like it, and that's because of the feelings when you going into the shop but it also because that's sort of the person I'd like to be. So, when I looked at their clothes...the people in those pictures, they're sort of...I'm aspiring to see them. ...So, I think it's the aspiration and that's become an attachment, because it's attached to where I want to be in the future." (Female, 23)

"But I'd say possibly Superdry, because I still have quite a few of their clothes, and I've just found a store in Oxford the other day, and I've browsed that just because I still think that the brand image that they portrays is still something that I would like to have. Sort of like, people in their 20s and you would like to think that they look good" (Male, 24)

Apart from *actual self-congruence* and *ideal self-congruence*, respondents also indicated that their attachment to a particular brand is because of the fit between the brand image/personality with their social self (*social self-congruence*). Respondents are likely to use brands in order to communicate their social self or in order to be regarded by other people who they think they are or whom they would like other people to consider them as.

“For example, with Oxfam, the social causes that they’re trying to, they’re trying to get rid of famine, they’re trying to get rid of conflicts, trying to overcome poverty, these are the values that I identify with, I think that, hey these are good causes and I like what they’re doing, so I like the brand.” (Male, 29)

“Apple represents feelings which represent a lifestyle, it represents an aspirational value so when you have an iPhone, people will like...’oh have a look’...something that people are aspire to, whereas the Samsung sounds common and therefore it doesn’t make you feel that proud to own one, if you know what I mean. It’s the status that associated with you when you have an iPhone that aspirational status, that when you have one you feel you belong...it’s like a club... it feels like you belong to the club.” (Male, 41)

“I supposed fundamentally deep down it’s a tribe mentality. That you feel you belong to something with those, it’s another way of defining yourself. I am from Newcastle, I support Newcastle United, that’s how you describe yourself. And so, that’s just like I said another way of describing yourself, another way to tell people about yourself.” (Male, 24)

It is evident that consumers become attached to a particular brand because that brand is able to give them a sense of identity. Consumers’ sense of identity can fall under three different states, (1) their actual state, (2) their ideal state, and (3) their social state. The second construct is brand experience. There are two prominent drivers that determine the selection of an attachment figure (Hazan & Shaver, 1994): (1) familiarity and (2) responsiveness. Brand familiarity has been defined as the collection of direct and indirect experiences with the brand (Alba & Hutchinson, 1987).

Brand Experience

Brand experience refers to subjective, internal and behavioural consumer responses such as sensations, feelings, and cognitions, by brand-related stimuli (Brakus *et al.*, 2009). According to them, brand experience can be categorised into four dimensions: (1) *sensory brand experience* – related to one’s senses, (2) *affective brand experience* – related to one’s feelings

and emotions, (3) *intellectual brand experience* – related to one’s curiosity or thinking, and (4) *behavioural brand experience* - related to one’s physical actions. Respondents stated their diverse experiences with the brand, containing these four dimensions. Respondents stated that they became strongly attached to the brand because of the experiences they had with the brand.

“It’s just because each time I’ve gone in there [Fatface], I enjoyed the experience. And all the clothes that I bought from there, I enjoyed and it lasts a long time. Their staff and their products.” (Female, 22b)

“You’re leaving the world to the virtual world and then coming back again. I think that’s the experience, that’s the greatest things about Xbox.” (Male, 31)

“Well they [Leicester Tigers] are my...sorts of first experience really, watching sport and sort of going out and having sort of family and friends atmosphere. So, yeah I’ve big attachment with them. Probably will always do.” (Male, 23)

It is evident from the passages above that brand experience will lead to stronger brand attachment. The next discussion categorised respondents’ brand experiences specifically into the four dimensions of brand experience: sensory, affective, intellectual, and behavioural. First *sensory brand experience*, which is related to one’s senses.

“...Because it [Mercedes Benz] is so comfortable, it shows...relax and the engine is not under strains...and it doesn’t feel wobbly...it’s still quiet and settle and you know...like a bullet.” (Male, 41)

“It’s nice going to the restaurant [Ready Steady Spice] as well. The ambience is quite nice. Everybody is quite relaxed. It smells really nice, and the chef and everybody just make you feel that you’re welcome and you just want to go in, and have a look at their cooking or whatever they are saying that they do. They are quite open.” (Female, 28)

“Because, they’ve [John Lewis] got nice things, they put things aesthetically. They’ve got nice products. It’s a very clean space. It’s not messy. A lot of stores are messy and smell horrible. They smell nice. It doesn’t smell bad. People are generally helpful. Even if you can’t afford them, you can roam. You can go and see the nice furniture and imagine having those in your house. It’s just a nice environment.” (Female, 34)

Second is *affective brand experience*, which is related to one’s feelings and emotions. A female respondent explained in detail about her experiences that lead to stronger attachment with the brand. She recalled that she always enjoys shopping there because of the positive

environment, which is positive towards her feelings and emotions. She elaborated the shop's atmosphere as well as their staff. Another female respondent confirmed her feelings toward the restaurant, which made her felt good.

“Like, when you go in there, you're not...you always associated it with a positive...like feelings and emotions. And when you go in there, like people have been helpful...when I'm shopping, I don't like people rushing up to me and asking, 'Can I help you?' all the time, I like to browse first. It's nice when they acknowledge you, but if it isn't too straightforward. So, I guess it's a positive atmosphere and a friendly atmosphere when you go in there. It sort of, all of things that you want when you go shopping, like friendly atmosphere and helpful but overly pushy.” (Female, 22b)

Alongside, a male respondent reported a sense of *nostalgia* in his experience with the brand. He mentioned two examples; one was when he did competitive swimming wearing the brand and was winning, whereas the other example was related to his parents. On the latter example, he explained that the nostalgic experience that he received from his parents led him up until now in becoming attached to the brand.

“...There's something in it [Speedo]. I don't know. Right now I just can't say. It kind of takes me back to when I was a kid when I did the competitive swimming. I was fast and I could swim and I was free in the water. Sort of when I was like 11, 12, 13, 14, doing the swimming. I put them now, I almost going back to that the time when I was doing races and when I was winning.” (Male, 51)

“When I was a little kid. I remember that I went...I got into grammar school when I was eleven. And I remember that Mum and Dad took me to M&S to get some shirts. And what they got me was a blue shirt, white shirt and a grey shirt. And it was all from M&S. And I supposed that brand attachment from quite a young age and it kind of represents a sense of stability for me.” (Male, 51)

Third is *intellectual brand experience*, which is related to one's curiosity and thinking. It is being told by a male respondent that the experience with the brand had stimulated his mind.

“It relaxes my mind. Even though it stimulates the mind and your working faster. It relaxes your mind because it's so focus orientated that you don't think about anything else all around concentrating in one. So, you relax and keep calm, while you're playing. So, that's what Xbox is.” (Male, 31)

Later he also added on his experience that stimulated his mind by leaving the real world to the virtual world and back to the real world again. Another respondent said that he always thought of others, in comparison with his brand, as inferior.

“[Is Xbox special for you?] Yeah, any Xbox would be. Sometimes you got a, you know, when you got a hectic life, family life, businesses, work, friends. Sometimes you just want to have your space and this is virtual. So, you’re playing online, you’re playing with people that you don’t know, that you never met. They’re not asking you personal questions. They’re not asking you how’s your day been. It’s just, you go on, you play your game, and have a laugh, and you come back to your normal life again. In a way you’re leaving the world to virtual world and then coming back again. I think that’s the experience, that’s the great thing about Xbox.” (Male, 31)

Another example came from a long story that has been told by a female respondent. At the very beginning she encountered a problem with a brand, but the way the staff handled it was in a way that she felt a very nice experience. In the end, that experience has led her to think that the brand gives something to her that she doesn’t obtain from other brands, the feeling of being respected.

“We did an online order with Waitrose, this week in fact. And it came yesterday. And, when you do the online order, you can either choose your fruits and vegetables by weight or by item. So we did it by item, because I knew that I wanted five. And then they estimated the price, cause they will actually weigh them to estimate the price, and the price that we ordered, we found it, you know, it wasn’t like paying in the shop. That’s one reason that we quite like to do online shopping, because you know what you’re going to pay. And we got the delivery yesterday, and looked at the sales, and it was about £8 more expensive. And it was all because the fruits and vegetables that they picked were bigger items then calculated. So, we called up just to say that we just want to flag up that there seems to be a discrepancy in the way you calculate things. Because you’re saying that six [items] should cost this much based on what you calculated, whereas it costs us twice as much. And obviously the weigh is about 40% difference. And they said, ‘Next time tell us approximately how much you want to pay. But this time we’ll refund you.’ So, they didn’t really question, they just treat you with respect I guess, whereas other shops don’t. I guess it makes you feel valued and respected. And you can buy nice things, which make you feel special. At Waitrose. Tesco has a lot of problems.” (Female, 34)

Fourth is *behavioural brand experience*, which is related to one’s physical action. The pleasant experience (e.g. good consumer service) that a female got from the brand has led her behavioural actions in terms of visiting the store and even wandering around the store. Just as a respondent stated that the experience that he got from the store has changed the way he behave. He would straight away go his brand’s store.

“I don’t think...I can’t remember in particular whether they [John Lewis] have good customer service. I’m sure they have. But I can’t think of any this in minutes. It’s a nicer experience going around the store if you can’t afford to buy anything. The nearest John Lewis is in High Wycombe. So sometimes we might, if I need to buy presents, I might stop of John Lewis. I would like wander around the shop. And I don’t really do that anywhere else. I wouldn’t go and wander around Debenhams.” (Female, 34)

“ ...And even now I go to M&S to get something which is reliable and which would fit me. And you know it’s a reasonable price. So for me buying clothes mean going to M&S. Genuine, everything that I’ve got on is M&S. Which includes shoes, clothes, and socks. M&S trousers, shirts, all M&S. It’s very practical for me.” (Male, 51)

“I shop at Tesco for several reasons. One is location. I mean it’s only less than 10 minute-drive from where I live. It’s a big Tesco. So, I’m quite familiar with where everything is...I like that. I don’t need to be spending a lot of time to figure out where things are. I like to go Tesco because I know the aisle, the food that I’m going to get...the juice or whatever it is. I just can go quickly and get it.” (Female, 28)

“ ...But in terms of things that they [My Protein] can do, the quality of the products, the result, the service, it’s very bare bone, but everything is done very-very well. Like keeping the website just plain, white, with a couple of sub headings. It’s very clear to manoeuvre around.” (Male, 23)

One female respondent answered that she is strongly attached to the brand because of the experience that she had with the brand. She mentioned that every time that she visited the shop, she felt very comfortable. Later, she added that experience is one of the most important factors for her in becoming attached to a particular brand. She told her good experiences with another brand which in the end she became attached to that brand.

“I took a joke with my Mum, it’s sort of like...that [M&S] is her church. That’s where she goes. I feel very comfortable in there [M&S] and it feels like home now because it’s something that has been there since my childhood with my Mum and my dad. I find it a very comfortable place to be.” (Female, 23)

“I’m trying to get an example. I think if I had a good experience in that shop, then I can quite easily become attached to place, because for me it’s very important. If you go in to a shop, it’s really important that you’re not hassled, no one is trying to make you to buy something, you know, pressure me to buy something. If you go to the changing room, and it feels like you wouldn’t try to steal something, you know...very relaxed, and everything is laid out nicely. So I would say like, that’s how I kind of feel about a brand like Fatface.” (Female, 23)

Apart from familiarity, responsiveness has been regarded as the other factors that influence the selection of an attachment figure (Hazan & Shaver, 1994). *Responsiveness* can be considered in terms of fulfilling three basic psychological needs (*autonomy, relatedness, and competence*) (La Guardia & Patrick, 2008; Thomson, 2006).

Brand Responsiveness

Thomson (2006) argues that brand can also be responsive in terms of fulfilling consumers' basic psychological needs of *autonomy, relatedness, and competence*. Autonomy refers to the needs of individuals to feel self-chosen, self-governed, and self-endorsed in doing their activities, whereas relatedness refers to the needs of individuals to feel a sense of belongingness, connectedness and closeness with others (Deci & Ryan, 2000; Ryan & Deci, 2000). According to Deci and Ryan (2000), competence refers to the needs of individuals to experience effectiveness, challenge and achievement in one's activity. A respondent reported that he is attached to several brands (e.g Speedo and National Geographic) because the brands give him a sense of freedom and *autonomy*. Another respondent proclaimed that the brand makes her feel free to be who she is.

“And National Geographic is about freedom and autonomy and my value sets, which links to walking around the countryside, and Speedo links to freedom. And I get a strong sense of freedom and identity when I'm in the water swimming. And it's been a strong brand since I was young that I associated with, Speedo was a big brand ...and so I kind of associated that brand (Speedo) with success, achievement, and freedom...and everything else that's exciting.” (Male, 51)

“I guess like...why I like their clothing [Fat Face], it's not to...like...the style of the clothes...the style of the clothes they have...they sort of, they can be smart but not overly...sort of...showy. So, I guess the type of clothes I liked, because they're similar to me, and that's why I go there. So, I guess in that respect, yes.” (Female, 22b)

Moreover, another male respondent described his own self-choice or volition that led to the feelings being recognised that he got from other people, in this case by his subordinates, is what makes he chose Mercedes. He described, in receiving this recognition by others, that his feelings were satisfied, by stating that he got 'the tool' and 'the car'.

“It’s a status symbol, it’s a functional product, but again it’s something that is aspirational. When I worked for a company they gave me a Mercedes...and because they said ‘you can choose between these’...I said ‘I’ll have the Mercedes, thank you.’ So, when you drive that...people are saying, ‘Oh, the boss is driving a Mercedes’...so there’s an element of status. So you feel you’ve got *the tool*...you’ve got *the car*.” (Male, 41)

It is apparent that consumers’ attachment to a particular brand is influenced by *relatedness*, one of the three basic psychological needs. As one male respondent stated, a restaurant becomes his favourite restaurant because it reminds him of a sense of togetherness with his family before living all by himself; whereas another respondent stated that the initial reason that she is attached to the brand is because of the relationship with her best friend.

“Me and my sister, [we] both like them [Innocent]. I live with her in London over the summer whilst starting my course. And so some evenings, what we’d love to do is just chill out, have a nice healthy meal, watching TV, to catch up with our day, what we’ve been doing, and I guess we like to make stuff, sometimes with Innocent. We’d have an Innocent pot, which is nice because I guess I kind of associated it with her. ...And she’s like my best friend.” (Female, 22a)

“One of my favourite restaurants is TGI Friday’s, that’s my favourite, maybe because of personal experience, before me and my family be apart, we go to that restaurant.” (Male, 20)

“My friend, one of my best friends from home, she does a sport called mountain boarding. And it’s like skateboarding, her brother also does it and he is a world champion, and Fat Face sponsors her brother, and in store they put a picture of him doing stunts and things. And because they sponsor him, that’s why I like them a bit more, because they’re helping him.” (Female, 22b)

Continuing the conversation, she stated that she became emotionally attached to the brand because of that connection between her and her best friend. Not only that, she also stated that she became emotionally attached to Fat Face because of her relationship with her Grandmother.

“I would say like emotionally [attached] would be Fat Face, ...because I think of this connection with my friend’s brother who I also know being sponsored. And it was like...previously when I bought...when I was younger I bought stuff from Fat Face. I didn’t have any pocket money. I bought a pair of boots with the money from my grandma. ...It was like my 18th birthday present. (Female, 22b)

“Being from Newcastle you don’t really have a choice, you support Newcastle United or you don’t have any friends. Yeah, I definitely support Newcastle United and follow them.” (Male, 24)

He added that at the very beginning it was a pressure, which he got from his friends, that he started to follow a football club. Not only towards a football team, one of the reasons behind his attachment towards a clothing brand was also because of a sense of relatedness.

“Well, since I first went to school. Since about four years old. So, that’s 20 years now, which is scary. But that was just because everyone in my school supported it. So it’s like a peer thing. Everyone did it and if you want to fit in, you have to support Newcastle as well. And it sort of grew from there really. It wasn’t led by my parents, it was all my friends, and everyone that I went to school with. That’s where the pressure was to support Newcastle.” (Male, 24)

Apart from fulfilling their sense of *autonomy* and their sense of *relatedness*, consumers are attached to a particular brand because that brand can fulfil their need for *a sense of competence*. Two male respondents reported that the brand that they were using gave them a feeling of competence. For the first respondent, the brand gave him the sense of feelings that he is able to swim well wearing it, whereas for the second respondent, by using the brand he got the feelings that people will regard that he knows a bit of fashion.

“...and I like the brand because you can do proper swimming when you wear Speedo, because that was what all proper swimmers wore when I was a kid. That was one thing for me... because I know that if I put my Speedo swimming trunks now, you know, it kinds of takes me back to when I was a kid, when I was doing competitive swimming. It was fast and I could swim and it was free in the water. And that was when I was 11, 12, 13, 14...sort of doing the swimming. So, I put them on now, I’m conscious that I was going back to the time when I was doing races and I was winning. So, this idea put my Speedo on, it does gives me the sense of power, speed, achievement, and all the aspirations I have to achieve things.” (Male, 51)

“I supposed, you sort of feel in a crowd as well, because it’s probably the most popular student brand [Superdry] at the moment. It’s just come out of nowhere. So, you do feel like you belong...people know that you know a little bit about fashion. You’re not just wearing everything, say Primark or something, or being a bit weird and wearing a Newcastle United shirt, it sort of shows that you know a little bit about what you’re wearing, take a little bit of care.” (Male, 24)

Apart from the three constructs that have these determinants of brand attachment, several other constructs also appeared from the exploratory study. Each of these constructs will be

discussed here. The first construct that appears as the antecedents of brand attachment is *brand reputation*.

Brand Reputation

Reputation has been regarded as the output of the brand's concept and the brand image, which will be maintained over the brand's life (Park *et al.*, 1986). Brand reputation refers to the result of the brand identity that the company nominates and the extent that consumers undergo the promises that the company generates (Veloutsou & Moutinho, 2009).

"I don't know...you know the usage of the product at a time, besides Apple have an image of quality, they have an image of high standard of quality, easy to use, they have good reputation...the kind of profile of people who use the product tend to be well meaning people...drives me to the profit." (Male, 41)

As can be seen, a respondent reported that the *brand reputation* that the company has is what drives him in becoming attached to that brand. Moreover, he also stated that one of the reasons he has strong attachment with two other brands is because both of the brands have reputation that is well respected.

"Well, it's a...hmm...how do you notice it [Audi] is not as expensive as Mercedes Benz but they give you good quality car. They give you something respectable. In the UK, they talked about what they called a 'street cred'." (Male, 41)

"I would say the person is very important. I met people who work there and heard very good stories about them, the organisation [Oxfam]. And about the individual I've spoken to about the work they've completed. You know, if you're speaking about brand, actually, people, for me, the most crucial element of that, that's what makes a brand or not. ...For me it's not just people, it's the whole visual aesthetic image, also the public image, the causes they engage in sort of stuff." (Male, 29).

"I think Microsoft is great. A lot of people talked down on Microsoft. I personally believe Microsoft did great. They're always evolving, always growing. They can be a bit robbery in price. But everything comes up with a price. If someone creates something...they are going to put a price on it. If you want it, you pay for it, if you don't then don't take it. I think Microsoft is great. It's user friendly and it's growing. A lot of people use it and they provide a lot of supports for a lot of people as well. Like for the blind, for the deaf. Education wise. They do pump a lot into humanity." (Male, 31)

A female respondent said that she has an emotional attachment towards the brand because she considers it as a good company that is willing to help the development of talented young people.

“Hmm, in terms of like, the sponsorship, sponsoring my friend’s brother. It would be, I guess it’s like help for him. It makes me see Fat Face as a genuine company, you know, helping young and upcoming sports people.” (Female, 22b)

“Usually...yeah...I think so...most of the time...yeah...always Kellog’s...I think. It’s just because they have...maybe because that’s the most popular one. Another thing is that...I like Kellog’s cereal, maybe because they are...yeah...also due to their popularity maybe and because they are everywhere and they have a range of products, you associate [Kellog’s] as a successful product.” (Male, 20)

Popularity or reputation from a brand has been judged by one of the male respondents to be the reason of the brand being chosen as one of his favourites. Furthermore, he stated that the other reasons for choosing the brand as one of his favourites is that the brand has no controversies. He declared that while comparing it with another brand.

“ ...They [Kellog’s] have no controversies surrounding them...you know...for example, a big brand like Apple, there are controversies surrounding them...you know...for example, the labour conditions in China or if we are talking of food product there’s a manufacturer called Monsanto, and its controversies surrounding them, regarding the effects of their products on animals...but with Kellog’s you don’t see that kind of controversy ...So, yeah...I think that’s another thing...I think that affects my decision to choose Kellog’s over another brand.” (Male, 20)

Based on the findings above, brand reputation has been contemplated as a signal of image or identity of the brand itself or the company. The second construct that came out from the exploratory study to be the antecedents of brand attachment is *perceived quality*.

Perceived quality

Generally, quality can be described as superiority or excellence, and perceived quality can be described as the consumer’s perception on a brand’s overall superiority or excellence (Zeithaml, 1988). Perceived quality can also be defined as the consumer’s judgment on the overall quality of a brand with respect to its intended purpose and compared to alternatives (Aaker, 1991). Respondents reported that one of the most important criteria for them in choosing a brand is their *quality*.

“ ...Having bought a couple of cheap pairs and a few of them just fall apart, I do think that quality is the main criteria for a person to choose when buying pair of jeans. And, I can say that I’m fairly loyal to Levis.” (Male, 24)

“ ...I’m not mentioning Clarks shoes which is another one, which is very related to another one of my favourite brands as well. So I buy Clarks shoes, it fits me, it always have done. Mum and Dad always bought me Clarks shoes as a kid because they’re good quality reliable shoes.” (Male, 51)

These respondents stated that because those brands always give them good quality products, they started to consider them as their favourite. One respondent declared that it is the quality that makes him loyal to the brand. The reason why quality can lead to attachment is because consumers think that it is congruent with their beliefs or their principles. It can be seen as one male respondent stated that he chooses to have good quality products because of a sense of identity.

“I shopped at M&S for food quite a lot and I like them. I find them too expensive but I like them. You get reliable foods and reliable products, clothes.” (Male, 29)

“But at the same time, I don’t generally shop at places like Primark. That’s more practical reasons, because I don’t like their management processes, so I don’t shop at places like Gap or Primark based on principles. But I generally probably wouldn’t anyway because I prefer something a bit better quality.” (Male, 29)

A female respondent said that the brand is one of her favourite, because it does represents high quality. She even noted that the brand would rectify the products if they find out that the products don’t have good quality. Two other males added that they chose the brand because they perceived that the brand represents good quality products.

“ ...Because, they [John Lewis] have got huge variety of products, they have very good customer service, they have very good quality generally. And, if they don’t have good quality they rectify it.” (Female, 34)

“First, maybe it’s because of their [Kellog’s] popularity and another thing is...the cereal is...yeah...I mean...their cereal have good wholemeal materials and wholemeal ingredients ...I [choose] Kellog’s because of the product quality.” (Male, 20)

“To be honest that’s probably the main one, other than the time and efforts that I invested. The fact that it [My Protein] does what it is supposed to do as well than most of the products that cost double. And it doesn’t skim on the quality at all. It just cuts

its margins in terms of what it does to your body. It uses the same high quality ingredients, as other top brands but it doesn't skim on the quality." (Male, 23)

Two female respondents also declared that one of the reasons that they are attached to a brand is because of the quality of the brand itself, apart from it has been there throughout her life.

"Dependable, it [M&S] has been there throughout my whole life. The quality." (Female, 23)

"And to be honest, I don't see what's the big fuss about Waitrose. You pay for the same products that you can get in Tesco ...You can get good quality products, for cheap prices, or if you really want to get a better quality at the least you get that option you can go anywhere from Tesco Value to Tesco Finest. And it's up to you, you know, the price and the quality is good anyway." (Female, 28)

The latter respondent argued by comparing the quality between two brands. She argued that many of her friends considering the competing brand to be superior in quality, but she found out that her brand has that quality as well and this has made her choose and attach to the brand. The last construct that appeared from the exploratory study as the determinant of brand attachment is *trust*.

Trust

Brand trust has been defined as a condition where consumers are willing to rely on the brand and its ability to perform its stated function (Chaudhuri & Holbrook, 2001). Moreover, these authors argue that trust is able to help consumers, which feel vulnerable, by minimising the level of uncertainty within an environment so that they know they can rely on the trusted brand.

"...But if you trust, you're likely to build up a stronger attachment. That's what I would argue." (Male, 29)

Most respondents stated that it is the degree of *trust* that they have with the brand, which makes them become attached to the brand.

"I supposed. I don't really know. I mean...I don't really know. I'm just thinking...I've always trusted the brand [M&S]. ...I trusted the brand when I was twelve...thirteen.

My parents trusted the brand. I continue to trust the brand, because I didn't have any bad experiences with the brand. I stay with it and it suits me." (Male, 51)

"...This [M&S] is a shop where at the beginning only sold clothes and now it does everything. It does insurance as well. I actually got my holiday insurance from there as well. I went home and browsed cross comparison website, like travel insurance websites in the UK and you can really get some cheap deals. But I didn't trust them. Because I didn't...the name upon other things, I just looked them but I don't know who they are. It's really cheap. But I just couldn't do it because I didn't know them. Whereas M&S was more expensive by quite a bit, but it's M&S. So I instantly trusted them more." (Female, 23)

"I trust them [Innocent] ...I really trust that they're sort of healthy." (Female, 22a)

A female respondent declared that she does not like a brand because she does not trust them. And she added that she trust the brand that she has strong attachment with. Furthermore, she explained that the reasons that she trusted the brand are because of the quality and because the brand is familiar to her.

"...I don't believe in the company [Mc D]. I don't think I...like, now I don't believe in the company, so I don't trust them. [Do you trust Fat Face?]. Yeah ...I think...I guess I assumed that their clothes have good quality and things that I bought there lasted...and I don't have problem with. So that I knew that when I'm buying from them they are going to have good quality and it would last. That's the trust that I have in them. That Fat Face produced good quality clothes. ...I guess it's because of the whole outdoorsy sort of mantra, that's why I believe them. I'm linking to what I like and so I want to trust them because they're like me. (Female, 22b)

A male respondent stated, being asked to choose from two of his favourite brands, that he is more attached to the other brand because of the sense of trust he has for the brand. And that sense of trust is the result of his investment of resources (time and efforts) in getting more knowledge about the brand.

"...In terms of My Protein, I have to trust a lot more because I put it into my body. So a lot more research and things go into it. Researching all the individuals and what goes into it, a lot of my time and efforts invested in that. On settling on that product line than clothes because I hate shopping ...So definitely My Protein ...So it's mainly that trust." (Male, 23)

"I think for me it has to do with the issue of trust. And it sounds even weird that I'm actually saying this now, because I think it is. I think for me, it is the big issue with trust. I need to know. I guess I'm a very control freak. I need to know what I'm doing. I need to know what it is and so with the food, I know that I can close my eyes, and

just leave it to them and I could trust the quality of the food will be there.” (Female, 28)

This female respondent also added on the factor of trust that leads her to become attached to the brand:

“ ...Because I know everybody who works there as well. And I’ve known them for years. I know the chef, I know the waiters. ...So yeah, I guess it has to do with the issue of trust. (Female, 28)

Another female respondent told a story about her experience with the brand. She said that it is one of the reasons that she became strongly attached to the brand, which is trust. Interestingly, at the beginning, the factor of trust came not from her to the brand, but it actually came the other way around, from the manager (as representative of the brand) to her.

“Once we went shopping [in Waitrose], my husband and I, and we bought a couple of birthday cards and a magazine. Went home in the evening and unpacked all the shopping together and the next day, I wanted to write the birthday card for a person. And I asked to my husband, ‘Where did you put the birthday card? Did you unpack them?’ ... ‘Oh, I didn’t unpack them either.’ And we realised that the magazine that we bought wasn’t home either. So, we realised that we must’ve left them. So I called at Waitrose and asked, ‘Did anyone hand it in a magazine and two birthday cards? We bought them but we clearly didn’t bring them home.’ And, the manager I spoke to said that, ‘Well, if they were left, they would just be put back to the shelves. If you come in, take out the magazine and birthday cards, find me, and that would be fine.’ And I did, I went in, I found two cards, the magazine, [then] I went to him. He didn’t want to see the receipt. He wasn’t worried about it, and said ‘Yes, that’s fine.’ So, that trust that they have of their customers, you feel valued I supposed.” (Female, 34)

5.4.3. Consequences of Brand Attachment

The extant literature has shown that brand attachment is capable of predicting consumers’ behaviours. Brand attachment has been shown to positively influence intention to recommend, willingness to pay price premium, and so forth, indicating brand loyalty (Vlachos *et al.*, 2010; Orth *et al.*, 2010). Park *et al.* (2010), while developing a scale to measure brand attachment that fosters brand-self connection and brand prominence, show that brand attachment is more plausible compare to brand attitude in explaining consumers’ moderately difficult behaviours and most difficult behaviours. However, Park *et al.* (2010) indicate that further research on these behaviours is needed. Based on the findings from the semi-structured interviews as well as the sentence completion, several consequences of brand attachment are identified. Each of these consequences is now discussed.

Brand loyalty has been defined as consumers' commitment to consistently re-purchase a product or service and brand (Oliver, 1999). Brand loyalty can be categorised under two aspects: attitudinal brand loyalty and purchase or behavioural brand loyalty (Chaudhuri & Holbrook, 2001). The first behaviour that came from the interview is *brand preference*.

Brand Preference

Brand preference refers to the consumer's inclination toward a particular brand that varies on the salient beliefs that are initiated at a given point in time (D'Souza & Rao, 1995). It is evident that because of their attachment to the brand, their *preference* is always being prioritised toward the brand even though competition exists.

"I still sometimes would choose Superdry over some brands." (Male, 24)

"...There are so much competitions now if I want to buy goggles, but for preference I always buy Speedo goggles if I can. Sometimes you just so overwhelmed with choice, but for me it can be a quick decision on price and availability if I need a pair of goggles. But I get through a lot of goggles over the year. But you know, preference always go to Speedo, if I can." (Male, 51)

"I would probably choose them [Levis] because I got them previously. I know that they fit me in, what style I want. And I suppose it's probably laziness and not wanting to experiment and just choose in the brand that I know and recognise and know that they're going to be good for me. So I would probably choose this. If someone gave me £60, rather than going to Primark and buy pair of jeans, I probably go straight away to Levis shop, because I know it would be a good product." (Male, 24)

"...So yeah, I guess if I would have to choose between all the supermarkets. I wouldn't think twice and actually I would just go in to Tesco." (Female, 28)

As can be seen above, one female respondent stated her preferences toward the brand that she feels attached with compared to other brand. Being faced by several other brands as their option in a competitive environment, respondents reported that they would still choose the brand that they are attached to. It can be inferred that brand attachment leads to brand preference. Moving from brand preference as a consequence, the second consequence that the respondents reported is *intention to recommend* the brand.

Intention to Recommend

Intention to recommend can also be regarded as positive word-of-mouth (WOM). Positive WOM refers to positive informal communications among consumers concerning evaluations of the brands, which includes actions such as delightful, meaningful, or offbeat experiences; recommendations to others; and even obvious display (Anderson, 1998).

“From what I’d seen, it [My Protein] has got a really loyal fan base...for people that don’t...you know...just want a product that is good and unfussed about...you know...about too much glamour or...sort of an all-round product, they just want something that is really effective. For those kinds of people then...yeah...it’s great. I do recommend it to a lot of people.” (Male, 23)

“But whenever I can...sort of...I do mentioned about the restaurant [Ready Steady Spice], and the high quality, and how friendly everybody is, and about how great the food is. So that if other people want to go, then they can and hopefully they’ll have the same experience that...you know...that I have with the restaurant.” (Female, 28)

“I will speak highly of them [Oxfam], when people ask. So, there’s a sense of loyalty in that sense, word of mouth, you know, complement them saying that they do good work.” (Male, 29)

Intention to recommend is also evident from the sentence completion. Respondents showed that they would give positive recommendations on the brand that they have strong attachment with. Even one male respondent stated that he would inform to people about the availability of sales promotion.

“[For Superdry I will] tell people when there is an opportunity for a discount.” (Sentence Completion, Male, 24)

“[For Microsoft I will] always recommend it.” (Sentence Completion, Male, 31)

[For M&S I will] always give good recommendations.” (Sentence Completion Female, 23)

The consequence of being attached to a brand is that consumers display their intention to recommend the brand or give positive WOM. Moreover, respondents also reported their *intention to purchase* the brand.

Intention to Purchase

Intention to purchase refers to the likelihood to which consumers intend to purchase a brand in the future (Maxham & Netemayer, 2002). Before stating their intention to purchase, respondents reported their previous behaviours in buying the products or services to support the brand.

“I have...yeah...in the sense that...iPhone...the first iPhone...and the iPhone 3...3G...the iPhone 4...iPhone 4S...now the iPhone 5...so five different versions of products. I also bought alone an apple Mac, and I have...I’ve been spending on lots of their products...I bought headphones, I bought all sort of things.” (Male, 41)

“They [Tesco] do get a lot of money in terms of all the groceries that I spent there. And the gas that I put.” (Female, 28)

“Well, I support them [Kellog’s] by buying the product.” (Male, 20)

“Given them [Leicester Tigers] a little bit of money for tickets.” (Male, 23)

“...But then again, Speedo will show you 3d images and such like. It’s not the end of the world. I buy Speedo floats, it’s not just goggles. I buy things related to.” (Male, 51)

Not only that, respondents also stated that they are most likely to purchase products/services from the brand in the future.

“If I was going to buy a football shirt...I needed one...I would buy a Newcastle one, because I’m probably attached to that brand more than any other.” (Male, 24)

“Well...no...it couldn’t ...I’m attached to iPhone...since the first iPhone came out I’ve had every version of iPhones. Now I’ve got the iPhone 5, so I’m attached. I don’t even think whether it’s a good product or not when it comes out I have to have it.” (Male, 41)

Furthermore, when he was asked what his next car purchase will be, he stated that he will buy the brand that he is strongly attached to.

“Most probably Mercedes. It will be a Mercedes.” (Male, 41)

It is also evident from the sentence completion that consumers support the brand that they are attached to by purchasing the brand and have the intention to continue buying and using the brand.

“[For Speedo I will] continue to buy and use it.” (Sentence Completion, Male, 51)

“[I think my relationship with Fat Face means] I would show loyalty to them when buying products that they offer.” (Sentence Completion, Female, 22)

“For [Tearfund] I will continue to offer financial support.” (Sentence Completion, Male, 29)

In addition to that, a male respondent reported that his intention to support the brand, which is a non-profit organisation, is through the continuation of giving them financial support. Another respondent even stated that he bought products that is not directly being sold by the brand, but because these products are associated with the brand.

“So, I spent money trying to understand the company and how it works. But I would say that Apple is a fantastic corporate machine. They are very successful, as one of the most profitable companies in the world, and so when you look at that. I am a business person...I admire good things, so I have to stop and think...what are they doing...in order to be able attract such a good customer and maintain it. So, in a way I want to know about it.” (Male, 41)

Intention to Repatronage

Together with intention to recommend and intention to purchase, respondents also showed their *intention to repatronage*. Intention to repatronage reflects the likelihood of consumers' intention to revisit the brand (Jones *et al.*, 2006) which includes revisiting the store or website.

“[For Fat Face I will] be loyal in terms of visiting a store to view their range of products.” (Sentence Completion, Female, 22b)

“In a positive way. I go [to M&S] regularly. I've used it for quite a lot of things, like...it's not just for foods. I went on holiday for a week. I went to the money exchange to get some euros. And I'll probably get a credit card from there and insurance.” (Female, 23)

“I buy their product [M&S, Speedo, National Geographic] all the time. So that’s what I mean by loyalty. It’s almost like my destination stores, or destination products or whatever. ...I go there to buy those products. And when I go online, I also buy their products. That’s it really.” (Male, 51)

“Hmmm, I like...if I’m doing like one of the occasions when I’m doing a proper shopping trip for clothing or something, then I’ll always make sure that I go there [Fatface], but I wouldn’t always buy something from there. But, it’s always sort of my hit list of top shops to go to. ... It’s probably one of the highest on my list compare to the others.” (Female, 22b)

“ ...But with Xbox, you know, there has been Playstation, there has been Nintendo, but I’ve always gone for Xbox. And, it’s because of the, you know because you’re comfortable with it and it’s got the games that I want. Even they do the same thing. I never get bored of it.” (Male, 31)

Resilience to Negative Information

The next construct being identified as the consequence of brand attachment is *resilience to negative information*. Bhattacharya and Sen (2003) note that consumers that is highly identified with the brand tend to overlook and downplay any negative information they may receive, particularly when the magnitude of such information is relatively minor by displaying forgiveness. Consumer forgiveness has been defined as the consumers’ willingness to give up retaliation, alienation, and other destructive behaviours, and to respond in constructive ways after an organisational violation of trust and the related recovery efforts (Xie & Peng, 2009). One female respondent, commented on encountering some negative experience, believed that it is unlikely to happen with the brand. She said that even if it happens to her, she would forgive the brand.

“I think it will be unlikely though. They [M&S] are like...sort of a company that if sees...even if something happens or even if the person that I speak to at the shop is not helpful, it would then head off there or didn’t go accept further. I think it would be sorted out. This has never happen to me, but honestly I can’t believe that they are sort of a company that this does not happen, but I honestly would let it go for once. If I found at each level, they would turn around to me and say, ‘yeah, we don’t care’. Obviously I would change my perception toward the company, where I’ll probably stop shopping there. ...Or I would probably wait for a moment when it happens again, and then I would probably definitely go elsewhere. But it has to be really serious. (Female, 23)

Another male respondent also shared the same behaviour with this female respondent above. He stated that it has to be something really serious in order for him to stop purchasing the brand, in the case where the public has regarded it as a common problem. He also mentioned that he would consider whether it happens only once or not, implying that he will forgive the brand. And this is similar with other respondents as well.

“Well, it depends really. It depends...if it’s something to do with food hazard or food poisoning, if it’s only once...yeah, it depends on how accurate the information and how many people reported the information. If it’s a common thing, if it’s a common problem, then I might stop buying Kellog’s because it’s dangerous.” (Male, 20)

“I probably complain, but...I don’t know, I guess...you know, I might react differently at that time. I probably complain, and it depends on how bad the food poisoning is, if it is just two or three hours thing, then...I guess it depends also on, you know, sometimes if you eat something and makes you really ill and that’s kind of put you off...just the taste. But, I don’t think it would necessarily affect my opinion of the brand [Innocent]. I wouldn’t be like, ‘oh look, it gave me food poisoning’, but probably more of the fact that the thought of the flavour makes me feel ill, rather than out of the principle not going back to the brand.” (Female, 22a)

“Well, if they don’t achieve their objectives, I think the money could be better invested elsewhere. But I also understand the difficulties the charities have, it’s not an easy set of working, you confronted by a low funding environment, you work a lot to get funding. And they [Oxfam] generally are very efficient on how they deliver things. ...Things like corruption... than I would probably really think twice... straight away I’d stop giving money.” (Male, 29)

The sentence completion exercise also shows that respondents are more forgiving towards the brands with which they are strongly attached. They are most likely to give the brand another chance, thinking that the problems or the disappointments that they encountered are a one-time event.

“[If Speedo disappointed me, I would] continue to try it in the expectation that any short comings would be one-off events.” (Sentence Completion, Male, 51)

“[If My Protein disappointed me, I would] be surprised, and I would give it another chance.” (Sentence Completion, Male, 23)

“[If Fat Face disappointed me, I would] be disappointed but not necessarily stop shopping there, maybe just not shop there for a while.” (Sentence Completion, Female, 22b)

“[If Waitrose disappointed me, I would] probably continue to shop there.” (Sentence Completion, Female, 34)

Interestingly, consumers do not only show forgiveness, but if they heard another person said negative things about the brand, they will act towards defending the brand. Even some respondents are willing to spend their resources (e.g. time) in order to defend the brand. One respondent stated clearly that if someone said negative things about the brand with which he feels strongly attached with, then he felt that the person was challenging his decision in choosing the brand.

“ ...When somebody’s obviously saying something that’s not true...I use an Apple product I leave them to fact...do they present fact? I respect that, but if they say something that’s not true because they heard other people saying that, I challenged them...because I tell them ...no, I thought it doesn’t do that, but if yours does that then it’s different...or maybe you don’t know how to use it.” (Male, 41)

Moreover, he added that the reason that he defended the brand was because of the attachment that he has with the brand, by being passionate about it.

“But generally you don’t want people to talk negatively about the product that you are using. You defend it, because if you are that passionate about it, it makes you feel rubbish when people talk about your product, so that’s why you defend it.” (Male, 41)

When asked about hearing people saying negative things about the brand that she is attached to, the respondent replied straight forwardly that she will defend the brand. Although the act of defending will depend on the situation, by listening to the case whether she would agree to it or not. Most likely she will not defend it by attacking back, but by sharing her case or experience. This is also a case with other respondents.

“Defend it [M&S]...and sort of... It depends on what they said. If they said, ‘oh I got the clothes...but it’s too old for me.’ Then I would probably agree, because that’s how I feel about it myself. If they criticised the foods, then I actually feel that person doesn’t know what they’re talking about because it is, most of people agree, the best place to go if you’re going to get ready meals and things packaged together. I would probably judge them for not thinking, like how’s that even possible. So, I would definitely defend it. And talk about my good experience there because I’m very loyal to them.” (Female, 23)

“I think I’d be pretty disappointed. If it’s true, then I’d be disappointed in the brand [Fatface]. Because, I do see it as a positive brand, one that I would always consider, so

I think it would be disappointment. My experience isn't the same with other people, and whatever reason is that the person is saying that the brand has done, but any other feelings, it depends on who wasn't right and who wasn't wrong, of what've they done wrong. ...I would probably given them the benefit of a doubt up until they [Fatface] are proven wrong." (Female, 22b)

"No, no, I wouldn't feel aggrieved by it. I'd be happy to engage in an intellectual discussion with some of these." (Male, 29)

A female respondent said that she sometimes feels that some of the products from the brand can be a bit disappointing; however, she defended the brand by stating that it might be her own fault and saying that the brand gives options. She added by saying that the other products from the brand are really good.

"Like I said, some of their veg pots, like the dull ones, I can feel that it needs to put more flavouring in them. Maybe that's just my taste buds, I don't know. But I think sometimes, that particular product can be quite bland in my opinion. But then they have others, they have other options, like the 'Moussaka' one is really tasty and the 'Mexican' is tasty too and the 'Masala' one as well. So they have other options." (Female, 22a)

"Well, I'd just tell them my point of view. I don't know if somebody had a bad experience with the foods, for instance. And they didn't like it and for whatever reason. I would just be straight to them and I tell them what I think about the food and what my experience is." (Female, 28)

However, the act of defending the brand can change depending on the nature of the brand itself. If the brand is in a condition where the environment is full of rivalry, as in sports competition, the act of defending is being conducted by attacking back the person who said negative things about the brand. It can be seen below that the same respondent acted differently when hearing negative things about two brands to which he is attached.

"I would defend Newcastle United very strongly. I think I might be with them, because when you insult, say Newcastle United, implicitly or Newcastle. The brand sort of interlinks with the city itself. It almost becomes synonymous, and so you insult one, you insult the other. So, definitely defend that brand." (Male, 24)

"I would say that. I probably defend it [Superdry] a bit to certain knowledge. ...And it's possible and I could see why people would criticise it, but I would defend it, I would say it's not too bad, it's still alright." (Male, 24)

Investment in Resources

Other than the consequences discussed above, it is evident that respondents are willing to invest their resources toward the brand with which they are strongly attached, whether it is investment in time, energy, and so forth. As can be seen in the following, one respondent stated that she had filled in a questionnaire for the brand and in the sentence completion, she clearly stated that in the future she is willing to fill in even more questionnaires and to do other things (e.g. enter competitions) for the brand.

“For [Innocent] I will fill any questionnaires, enter competitions, even work for it.”
(Sentence Completion, Female, 22a)

In accordance with the example above, a male respondent described that he is willing to be involved with the brand’s projects. Another male respondent also showed his investment in time for the brand. He was even willing to wait a period of time in order to get the new product from the brand.

“And, I do very willingly get involved with [Oxfam’s] projects, if I have the time, time is the key factor, maybe in the future.” (Male, 29)

“I feel good...feel good...I waited a long time for the iPhone. So, I guess that’s the strength of the feelings that I have...my contract expired probably 12 months ago and I waited for 12 months before I could get the new phone...So, happy that it’s here.”
(Male, 41)

It also evident, from the sentence completion exercise, that respondents are willing to go the “extra mile” for the brand with which they have strong attachment. Even in the case that will makes them disappointed, consumers feel obliged to tell the brand in order to make-up for that mistake.

“For [Ready Steady Spice] I will do what I can to see it grow/expand.” (Sentence Completion, Female, 28)

“For [Kellogg’s] I will travel to another store that slightly further if it’s not available in my usual store.” (Sentence Completion, Male, 20)

5.5 Revisiting the Research Model

Previous research suggests that brand attachment reflects emotional attachment displaying passion, affection and connection (Thomson *et al.*, 2005). These authors were the first in developing a scale to measure brand attachment. Later research conceptualised brand attachment not only exhibiting emotional bonding but also cognitive bonding, which include two constructs, brand-self connection and brand prominence (Park *et al.*, 2010). Brand-self connection displays the bond linking the consumer's self with the brand, whereas prominence displays the salience of that bond through perceived ease and frequency brought into the consumer's mind.

Prior research investigating the antecedents and outcomes of brand attachment has been quite dispersed in measuring brand attachment. Thomson (2006) used separation distress, borrowing from psychology research, to measure brand attachment. Other research (Orth *et al.*, 2010; Malär *et al.*, 2011; Vlachos *et al.*, 2010) used measurement of emotional brand attachment developed by Thomson *et al.* (2005). However, the findings of the exploratory study show that there is a congruity between the conceptualisation of brand attachment by Park *et al.* (2010) displaying brand-self connection and brand prominence, with consumers' conceptions of attachment.

In the conceptual framework for this thesis, it is proposed that there are three factors that act as antecedents of brand attachment, these are: *self-congruence*, *brand experience*, and *brand responsiveness*. Based on the findings, it has been suggested that there are six determinants that lead to stronger brand attachment. The six determinants are self-congruence, brand experience, brand responsiveness, brand reputation, perceived quality, and trust. Three new constructs (brand reputation, perceived quality, and trust) appear to be important in building stronger brand attachment; each one of these constructs will now be discussed.

Veloutsou and Moutinho (2009) note the formation and prosperity of consumer-brand relationships being predicted by brand reputation. In recent research, Batra *et al.* (2012) put forward perceived quality as the antecedent of brand love. These authors also argue that attachment is a prominent dimension in the construct of brand love. Likewise, Vlachos *et al.* (2010) indicate that trust is one of the factors that predict emotional attachment. In their study, these authors argue that trust towards the firm and employee reflects enabling the self. Thus, these three constructs can be regarded as the antecedents of brand attachment.

Apart from the antecedents of brand attachment, the exploratory study also shows the consequences. In the research model, brand loyalty is proposed as the single outcome of brand attachment. However, based on the exploratory study, six consequences appear from a strong attachment between consumers and the brand. The six consequences are *brand preference*, *intention to recommend*, *intention to purchase*, *intention to re-patronage*, *resilience to negative information*, and *investment in resources*.

Brand preference is a consumer's inclination toward a particular brand (D'Souza & Rao, 1995). This inclination can be reflected on consumers' intention to recommend, purchase or re-patronage the brand. Likewise, consumers' willingness to invest their resources (e.g. time), as can be seen from the findings, can be reflected in their intentions toward the brand (e.g. purchase intention). Previous studies on emotional brand attachment or brand love have acknowledged intention to recommend (e.g. Carroll & Ahuvia, 2006) and intention to purchase (e.g. Vlachos & Vrechopoulos, 2012), as the outcomes. Building a framework on consumer-company identification, Bhattacharya and Sen (2003) acknowledge resilience to negative information – reflecting consumers' forgiveness – as one of the outcomes. Park and MacInnis (2006) propose that stronger attachment results in consumers' willingness to invest their resources towards the brand. As consumer forgiveness and act of investing resources - appeared in the findings above, these constructs should also be included in this study as the consequences of brand attachment.

Considering the notion of a parsimonious model (e.g. Clark & Goldsmith, 2005), not all of the new constructs appeared from the exploratory study will be added to the research model. Moreover, these additional constructs are to some extent overlapping. For instance, in the exploratory study, the interviewees mentioned that reputation and trust act as cues on the aspect of quality. Thus, perceived quality can be embedded in these constructs. Similarly, Veloutsou and Moutinho (2009) measured reputation using similar indicators to measurement of trust (e.g. trustworthy and honesty). Likewise, in another study, Chaudhuri & Holbrook (2001) measure brand trust by assessing consumers' perception of the brands' trustworthiness and honesty. Hence, trust can be regarded as overlapping to the construct of reputation, or at least heavily inter-related. For the sake of parsimony, trust will not be added to the research model.

In measuring long-term brand reputation, Veloutsou and Moutinho (2009) use sustainable image as well. And this is evident from the findings in which respondents declared that not only the popularity of the brand, but also the brand's or company's values (e.g. social responsibility), which lead them to have a strong attachment. Vlachos *et al.* (2010) and Park *et al.* (2006) propose three pillars of self (gratifying, enabling and enriching) as prominent factors in building stronger brand attachment. A brand is able to enrich the self through offering core values or ideology that helps consumers to express their self (Park *et al.*, 2013). Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) associations or beliefs indicate the brand's values or ideology. So, it can be said that these actions help in enriching consumers' self.

CSR beliefs refer to the brand's status and activities with respect to its perceived societal obligations (Vlachos & Vrechopoulos, 2012; Brown & Dacin, 1997). CSR activities for a firm are not only for the sake of "doing good" and "the right thing to do", but also lead to "doing better", since consumers are particularly susceptible to these activities (Bhattacharya & Sen, 2004). They include environmental friendliness, commitment to diversity, community involvement, sponsorship of cultural activities and corporate philanthropy (Brown & Dacin, 1997).

It has been proposed that CSR activities bear strategic importance to many firms (Luo & Bhattacharya, 2006). Luo and Bhattacharya state that CSR influences customer satisfaction, market value and consumers' positive response toward brands. The CSR initiative has been regarded as the forefront of corporate consciousness, since consumers are susceptible to a brand's CSR initiatives (Du *et al.*, 2007; Bhattacharya & Sen, 2004). Holt *et al.*, (2004) reveal that consumers all over the world associate global brands with social responsibility. They indicate that consumers are convinced that successful global brands have the responsibilities to endeavour social issues. A study (Du *et al.*, 2007) has established the link between CSR to consumer-company identification. Moreover, it has been argued that CSR associations predict consumer-retailer love (Vlachos & Vrechopoulos, 2012). Thus, CSR beliefs should be included in the research model.

For the consequences of brand attachment, the constructs which appeared from the exploratory study are also overlapping. Brand preference, intention to revisit, intention to recommend, intention to purchase and investment in resources can be categorised as forms of loyalty (c.f. Orth *et al.*, 2010; Anderson & Srinivasan, 2003; Chaudhuri & Holbrook, 2001).

As can be seen from the research model, loyalty has been included as the consequence of brand attachment. Another construct that appeared from the exploratory study was the resilience to negative information.

The root of the construct of resilience to negative information is much closer to forgiveness. According to Xie and Peng (2009), consumer forgiveness refers to consumers' willingness to cease their alienation, retaliation, destructive behaviours and to reciprocate in constructive ways toward a company's mistakes. Drawing on Bhattacharya and Sen's (2003) work, resilience to negative information is defined here as the condition apparent when consumers are willing to overlook, downplay and forgive any negative information they may encounter about a brand with which they are emotionally attached.

Bhattacharya and Sen (2003) propose that the more strongly consumers associate themselves with brands, the higher is their resilience to negative information towards the brands. Here it is argued that when consumers identify themselves with a brand, they consider the brand to be similar to themselves, supporting being forgiving towards the brand (just as they are forgiving of themselves or their partners). Park *et al.* (2010) indicate that stronger attachment with the brand leads to consumers' defending the brand when brand makes a mistake. When others speak poorly about the brand, they consider that other people speak poorly about them, too, which increases their self-defence mechanism. Strong attachment dissipates consumers' judgment towards the brand's unethical behaviours (Schmalz & Orth, 2012). Hence, resilience to negative information should be included in the research model.

5.6 Chapter Summary

The findings were based on a small sample size of a total of twelve respondents. There was no real discernible variation in response by gender or age. For example, two respondents, one is male in his twenties and the other is female in her thirties, more or less gave similar responses. In the discussion on *resilience to negative information*, both of them are likely to behave similarly as the result of their attachment with the brand. Another example can be seen in the discussion on *self-congruence*, where two respondents (one is male in his twenties and the other is male in his fifties) gave similar response related to their identity.

Fournier (1998) indicates self-connection as one of the six other facets that determine the strength of the relationships between consumer and brands. Moreover, she added that

consumers' frequent and interactive behaviours toward a brand are needed to build relationships. Analogously, recent research (Ferraro *et al.*, 2011) postulates possession attachment to include possession-self link, general importance, and positive emotion. Just as it is argued that self-brand integration, positive emotional connection, and frequent interactions or thoughts are prominent aspects of brand love (Batra *et al.*, 2012). Therefore, it is appropriate in the main study to use Park *et al.*'s (2010) conceptualisation of brand attachment, which measure the two constructs (brand-self connection and brand prominence). Nevertheless, Park *et al.* (2010) consider the positive emotions (e.g. passion) toward the brand to be embedded in the link between brand and self, whereas Batra *et al.* (2012) and Ferraro *et al.* (2011) consider positive emotions as a separate dimension. It is worth considering combining Park *et al.*'s measurement of brand attachment with positive emotion.

In their paper, Clark and Goldsmith (2005) limit their research model to psychological traits due to the notion of parsimony. Following these authors, not all new constructs appearing from the exploratory study were inserted in the research model. Due to their importance and since some of the new constructs are overlapping, only two constructs were added. CSR beliefs were added to the model as the antecedent, whereas resilience to negative information was added to the model as the consequence of brand attachment. Hence for the main study in this thesis, four constructs are proposed as the determinants of brand attachment: self-congruence, brand experience, brand responsiveness, and CSR associations/beliefs. As has been discussed in Chapters 3 and 4, self-concept together with attachment theory has been chosen as theoretical framework in proposing the antecedents of brand attachment. Within self-concept theory, the notion of self-congruence appeared (Sirgy, 1982) – the fit between consumer and brand's image. A study indicates that self-congruence is an important determinant of emotional brand attachment (Malär *et al.*, 2011). Likewise, it has been suggested that familiarity and responsiveness are prominent factors in determining the selection of an attachment figure (Hazan & Shaver, 1994). Research shows that a brand's responsiveness positively influences attachment strength (Thomson, 2006). Familiarity has been defined as the collection of direct and indirect experiences (Alba & Hutchinson, 1987); therefore, this research uses experience rather than familiarity. Although Brakus *et al.* (2009) propose the link between brand experience and brand attachment, it has yet to be established.

Brand loyalty and resilience to negative information are proposed as the consequences of brand attachment. Even though loyalty has been proposed as the outcome of brand attachment

in several studies (e.g. Orth *et al.*, 2010), further studies are still needed. First, when investigating the link between attachment strength and its outcomes, these studies only used emotions to measure attachment. Second, further research is needed to broaden the generalisability regarding which particular behaviours are affected by stronger brand attachment.

The findings in the preliminary study are used to make the research model more comprehensive. After supplementing additional constructs to the research model, the next step is to continue to the main study, which is testing the relationship between brand attachment with its antecedents and consequences. The next chapter will discuss the methodology for the main study.

CHAPTER 6

METHODOLOGY

6.1 Introduction

The conclusion drawn from the preliminary study provides support to the research model, showing that the existing constructs in the research model indeed act as the drivers and outcome of brand attachment. However, findings from the preliminary study also suggest that there are additional constructs, which need to be added to the research model. The preliminary study delineates additional constructs, such as: Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) beliefs as the antecedent and resilience to negative information as the consequence of stronger attachment with the brand.

After discussing the research model, the chapter discusses the design of the study in order to test all the proposed hypotheses. A questionnaire-based survey has been chosen as the instrument to collect data. The measures in the questionnaire are from previous studies and adapted to ensure that the participants understand the questions. The chapter starts with the revised research model, moving on to the discussion of research philosophy. Then the discussion moves to the research design of the main study, which includes the research instrument, reliability and validity issues, sample and procedure.

6.2 Research Philosophy

Each piece of research is being guided by a research paradigm. A research paradigm is a framework that is used by researcher as a guideline in conducting a scientific research philosophically (Collis & Hussey, 2009). It is the fundamental belief underlying a scientific approach to investigation, which builds assumptions on how the world operates, and these assumptions lead to methods that can be used for inquiry (Soley & Smith, 2008). Collis and Hussey (2009) note that there are two main research paradigms: (1) positivism, which is based on realism, and (2) interpretivism, which is based on idealism.

The positivism paradigm is established by the objectives in discovering theories based on empirical research (observation and experiment), with the belief that reality is independent of us (Collis & Hussey, 2009). Positivists consider science and scientific research as the way to

get at the truth (Sekaran & Bougie, 2013). Only if phenomena and knowledge are confirmed by the senses, can they be justified as knowledge (Bryman, 2004). Collis and Hussey (2009) note that a positivist researchers focus on theories to explain and/or predict social phenomena by applying logical reasoning to underpin precision, objectivity and rigour. In addition, positivists are also concerned with replicability of their research, reliability of observations and the generalisability of findings (Sekaran & Bougie, 2013). The purpose of theory is hypothesis generation, to be tested and to allow explanations of laws to be assessed (Bryman, 2004). Sekaran and Bougie (2013) note that positivists use deductive reasoning by putting theories that can be tested by means of a fixed predetermined research design and objective measures.

On the other hand, the belief that social reality is subjective because it is formed by one's perceptions and is not objective is the basic belief of interpretivism (Collis & Hussey, 2009) or constructionism (Sekaran & Bougie, 2013). Bryman (2004) notes that interpretivism considers the social world to need a distinct logic of a research procedure, which mirrors the discreteness of humans against the natural order. Interpretivists or constructionists believe that the world is fundamentally or mentally constructed (Sekaran & Bougie, 2013). According to these authors, constructionists do not pursuit the objective truth but they try to comprehend individuals' minds in making sense of the world.

The centre of the attraction of positivism is measuring social phenomena, whereas the centre of attraction in interpretivism is on exploring the complexity of social phenomena, with a view to gaining interpretive understanding (Collis & Hussey, 2009) or emphasises on how individuals construct knowledge through studying on the accounts individuals give of issues and topics as well as on how individuals obtain these accounts (Sekaran & Bougie, 2013). Table 6.1 shows the distinction in assumptions between the two paradigms.

Table 6.1 Assumptions of the Two Research Paradigms

Philosophical assumption	Positivism	Interpretivism
Ontological	Reality is objective.	Reality is subjective.
Epistemological	Researcher is independent. Objective reality exists beyond the human mind.	Researcher interacts. Knowledge of the world is intentionally constituted through a person's lived experience.
Methodological	Process is deductive. Study of cause and effect with a static design. Research is context free. Generalisations lead to prediction, explanation and understanding. Results are accurate and reliable through validity and reliability.	Process is inductive. Study of mutual simultaneous shaping of factors with an emerging design. Research is context bound. Patterns and/or theories are developed for understanding. Findings are accurate and reliable through verification.
Method	Statistics, content analysis.	Hermeneutics, phenomenology, etc.
Validity	Certainty: data truly measures reality.	Defensive knowledge claims.
Reliability	Replicability: research results can be reproduced.	Interpretive awareness: researchers recognise and address implications of their subjectivity.

Source: Adapted from Weber (2004, p. 4) and Collis & Hussey (2009, p. 58)

In between the two research paradigms, there are several other paradigms such as critical realism and pragmatism. According to Sekaran and Bougie (2013, p.29), critical realism refers to “a combination of the belief in an external reality (an objective truth) with the rejection of the claim that this external reality can be objectively measured”. There are observations on phenomena that cannot be observed and measured directly (e.g. motivation) and these are subject to interpretation. Sekaran and Bougie (2013) note that the objective of the research is to progress toward the objective itself, through the use of triangulation to compromise with multiple flawed and erroneous methods as well as researchers bias.

On the other hand, pragmatists “feel that research on both objective, observable phenomena and subjective meanings can produce useful knowledge, depending on the research questions of the study” (Sekaran & Bougie, 2013, p.30). According to pragmatists, research is a result

of past actions, experiences and interactions with the environment. Sekaran and Bougie also note that pragmatism considers the current truth as tentative and see it as provisional. Theory is acquired from practice and then administered back to practice to attain intelligent practice.

Regardless of which is more appropriate among the two research paradigms (positivism vs. interpretivism), the common concern is the ability to justify the knowledge claims being used by the researcher (Weber, 2004). The decision to choose the research paradigm, which will guide the researchers in answering the scientific inquiry, falls under the researchers' argumentation. Nevertheless, it is important to clearly specify the criteria in order to ascertain the quality of the research. As has been noted by Weber (2004), the researcher needs to scrap the rhetoric between positivism and interpretivism, since the objective of research is to improve knowledge.

This present study is guided by the positivism paradigm. Several theories (e.g. attachment theory, self-concept) were used to develop the research model and hypotheses, adopting deductive research process (Collis & Hussey, 2009; Weber, 2004). Following Bart *et al.*'s (2005) research design, these research hypotheses have been tested using a mixed-methods research design to ensure its precision, objectivity and rigour.

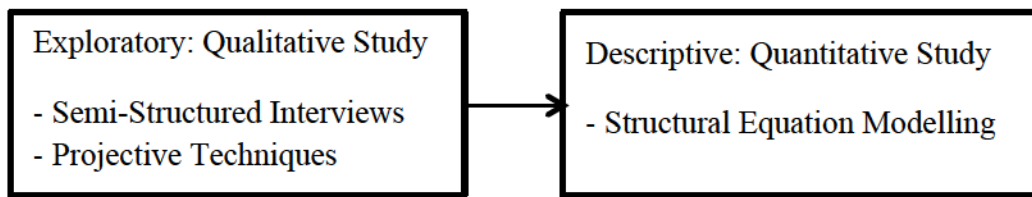
6.3 Research Design

Recall from Chapter 1 that the aim of this study is to investigate the antecedents and consequences of brand attachment. In order to achieve this aim, four objectives have been outlined. These objectives are:

1. Review of the literature on consumer-brand relationships, in particular brand attachment.
2. Develop a research model that explains factors influencing the formation and the outcomes of stronger brand attachment.
3. Validate the research model
4. Test the hypotheses proposed in the research model.

The research strategy for this study is a mixed methods strategy. Figure 6.1 illustrates the mixed methods strategy being employed in this study.

Figure 6.1 Mixed Methods Strategy of the Study



First, an exploratory study was conducted (see Chapter 5). Exploratory study is usually implemented to better comprehend the nature of a problem since only a few studies have been conducted (Sekaran & Bougie, 2013). For the main study, a conclusive research design is selected because the objective of the main study is to test all the hypotheses within the research model. According to Malhotra (2010), conclusive research aims to test specific hypotheses and examine relationships based on large, representative samples and the data obtained are subjected to quantitative analysis.

In his book, Malhotra (2010) categorises conclusive research into two types of research: (1) descriptive research and (2) causal research. The main study follows a descriptive research approach. The objective of conducting descriptive research is to describe market functions or characteristics, which is appropriate for the following purposes (Malhotra, 2010):

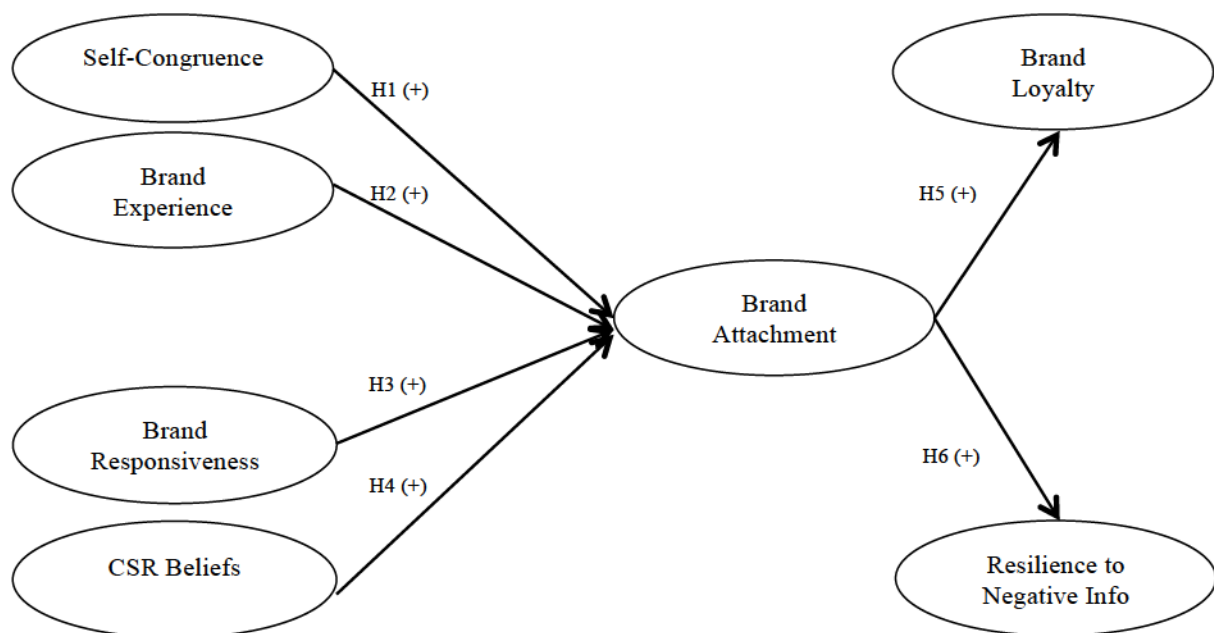
1. Expressing the characteristics of relevant groups (e.g. consumers).
2. Estimating the percentage of units in a specified population displaying certain behaviour.
3. Determining the perceptions of product characteristics.
4. Determining the extent to which marketing constructs are associated.
5. Constructing specific predictions.

The objective of the main study is to determine the extent to which marketing constructs are associated within the research model. The descriptive research was conducted using survey method. Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) was chosen to analyse the data, since SEM is able to estimate the measurement properties and test the proposed theoretical relationships using a single technique (Malhotra, 2010). Moreover, SEM has been considered as the best multivariate procedure and most efficient for testing structural model and research hypotheses (Hair *et al.*, 2010).

6.4 The Research Model

The constructs, which appear in the research model, are based on the literature and have been validated based on the findings of the preliminary study. There are three variables acting as the drivers of brand attachment: self-congruence, brand experience and brand responsiveness. Brand loyalty has been put forward as the outcome of stronger brand attachment. However, findings from the preliminary study also show that additional constructs appeared. Figure 6.2 below shows the full mediation model of the study.

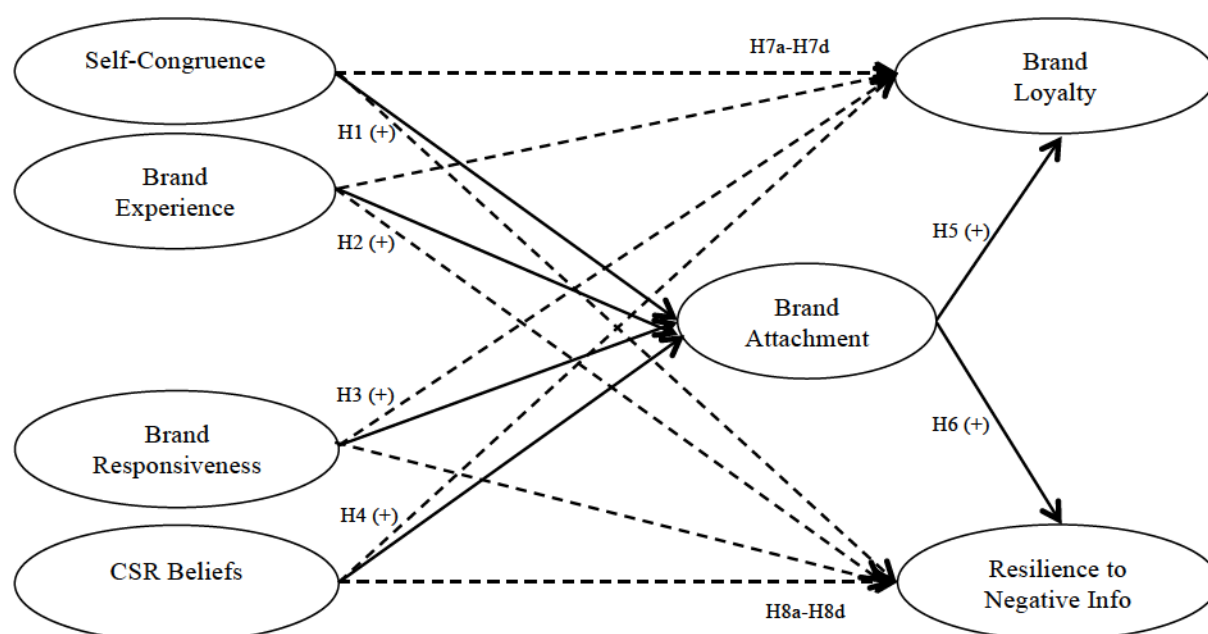
Figure 6.2 The Full Mediation Model



In the full mediation model, one additional antecedent is proposed to influence brand attachment – CSR beliefs. In conjunction with the new antecedent, findings of the preliminary study indicate increased details on the outcomes of brand attachment. Two behaviours (brand loyalty and resilience to negative information) appear as a result of strong bonding with the brand. These two additional constructs (CSR beliefs and resilience to negative information) are added to the research model. Figure 6.2 displays that overall brand attachment is influenced positively by four factors: self-congruence (H1), brand experience (H2), brand responsiveness (H3) and CSR beliefs (H4). The overall brand attachment fully mediates the relationships and lead to two consequences: brand loyalty (H5) and resilience to negative information (H6).

Consistent with prior research, the current study regards that brand attachment fully mediates the relationships. For instance, Vlachos *et al.* (2010) put forward consumer-firm emotional attachment to fully mediate the relationships between the antecedents (e.g. shopping enjoyment) and consequences (e.g. word-of-mouth). Another study (Stokburger-Sauer *et al.*, 2012) also put forward consumer-brand identification to fully mediate the relationships between the drivers and the outcomes. In order to examine the mediational role of brand attachment, a partial mediation model has been developed as shown in Figure 6.3.

Figure 6.3 The Partial Mediation Model



In testing hypotheses that entails causal modelling of survey data, one question that naturally arises are to whether an alternative model may fit the data equally well (Stokburger-Sauer *et al.*, 2012). Hence, this study put forward additional set of hypotheses. These hypotheses can be seen in Figure 6.3, the partial mediation model, indicated by dotted lines. The partial mediation model introduces two set of additional hypotheses. The first set of hypothesis (H7a-7d) indicates that there is a direct relationship between the five antecedents of brand attachment and brand loyalty; whereas the second set of hypothesis (H8a-8d) indicates that there is a direct relationship between the five antecedents of brand attachment and resilience to negative information. Similar to the initial research model, the relationship between brand loyalty and its antecedents is being moderated by attachment style. Figure 6.4 displays the theoretical moderation model.

Figure 6.4 The Moderation Model

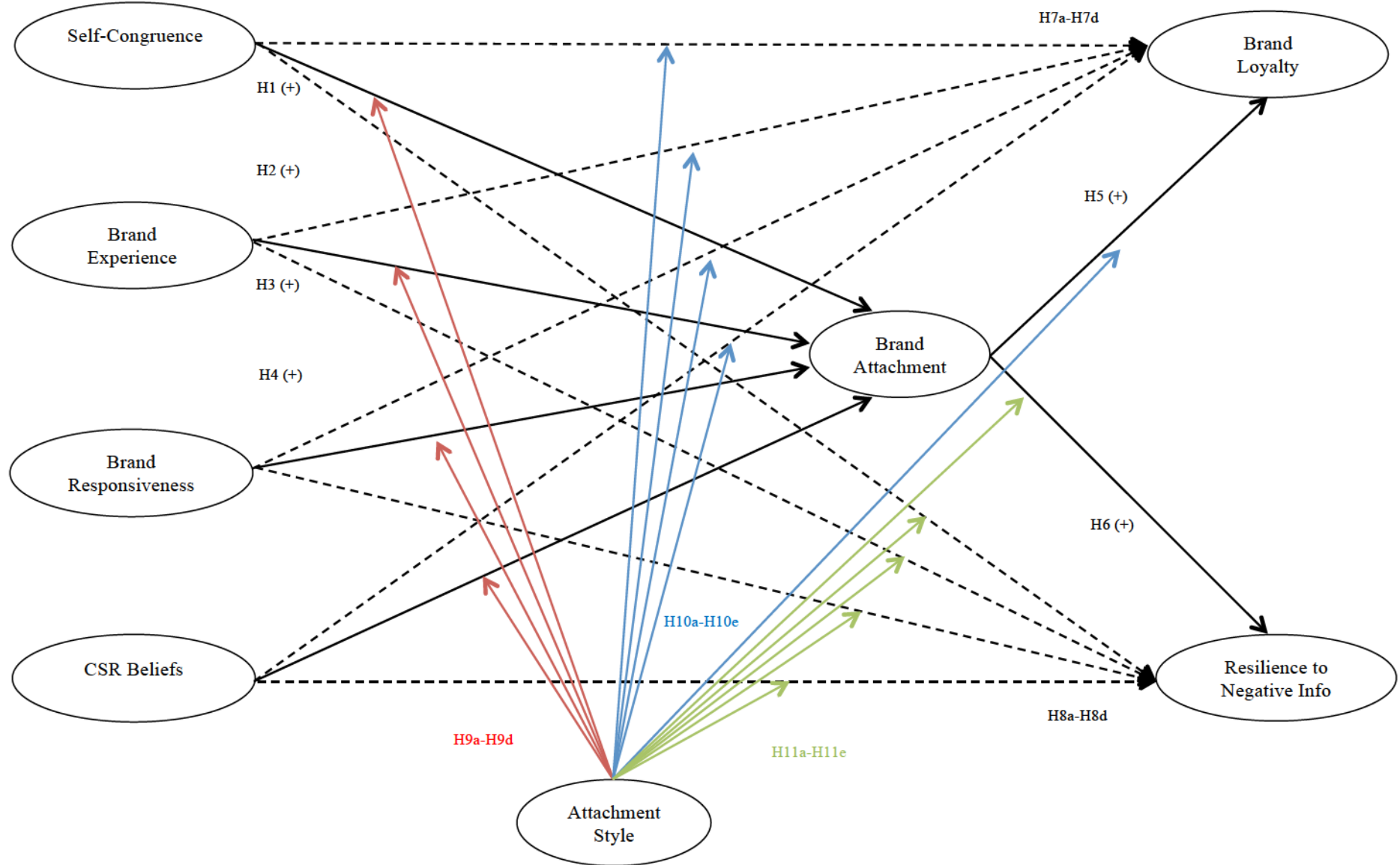


Figure 6.4 depicts that attachment style moderates the relationships between ideal self-congruence, sensory brand experience, brand responsiveness and CSR beliefs with brand attachment. The model also displays that the relationships between brand attachment with brand loyalty and resilience to negative information are being moderated by attachment style.

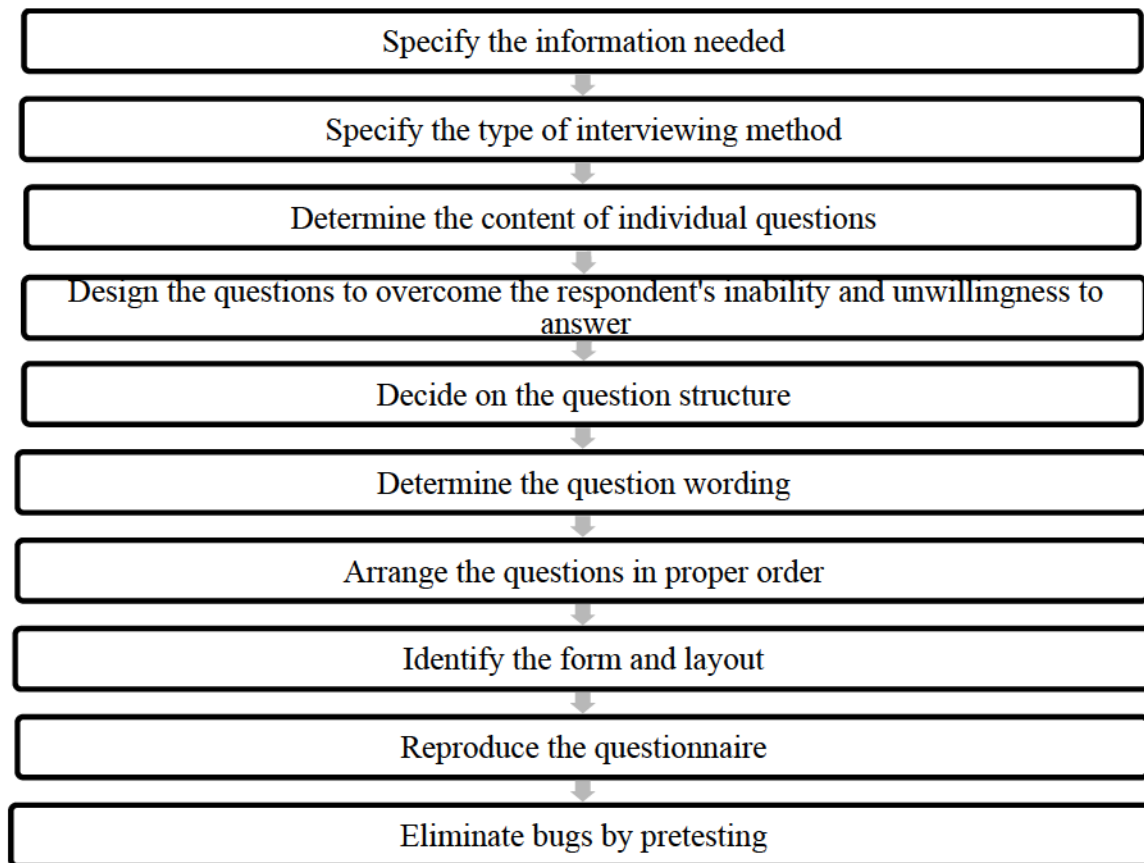
The moderation model introduces three set of additional hypotheses. The first set of hypothesis (H9a-9d) indicates that attachment style moderates the links between self-congruence, brand experience, brand responsiveness and CSR beliefs with brand attachment. The second set of hypothesis (H10a-10e) indicates that attachment style moderates the links between self-congruence, brand experience, brand responsiveness, CSR beliefs and brand attachment with brand loyalty. The third set of hypothesis (H11a-11e) indicates that attachment style moderates the links between self-congruence, brand experience, brand responsiveness, CSR beliefs and brand attachment with resilience to negative information.

6.5 The Research Instrument

In order to gather the data needed for this study, a survey method has been employed. According to Malhotra (2010), a survey method is a structured questionnaire composed to derive specific information from participants that act as the sample within a population. Thus, a questionnaire is designed for this purpose. Questionnaire refers to a formalised set of questions being used to obtain information from respondents, which occupy three specific objectives: (1) translating the information needed into a set of specific questions that the respondents can and will answer, (2) uplifting, motivating, and encouraging the respondent to become involved, to cooperate, and to complete the interview, and (3) minimising response error (Malhotra, 2010).

It has been noted that the weakness of designing a questionnaire is the lack of theory (Malhotra, 2010). However, the design of the questionnaire for this study followed Malhotra's (2010) guidelines in designing a questionnaire to avoid major mistakes. The 10 steps process can be seen in Figure 6.5 below.

Figure 6.5 Questionnaire Design Process



Source: Malhotra (2010, p. 336)

An introduction letter providing brief explanation of the project starts the questionnaire. Next, the questionnaire is divided into three big sections, (1) about the choice of the brand, (2) about the favourite brand, and (3) about the respondent. In the first section, the respondent is being asked to name one of his/her favourite brands alongside several other questions (e.g. frequency of usage). The second section consists of scaled items to measure all constructs in the research model, whereas the third section consists of several demographic questions related to the respondent (e.g. age group).

From the discussion above, the second section of the questionnaire consists of scaled items to measure the constructs. As can be seen in the research model, there are a number of constructs (e.g. brand attachment). These constructs are operationalised so that they are measurable. The details on the scale for each construct will be explained in the following section.

6.6 Measures

There are eleven constructs in the research model; some are unidimensional and some are multidimensional. Five out of the eight constructs are multidimensional constructs (self-congruence, brand experience, brand responsiveness, brand attachment and attachment style).

Self-congruence

Self-congruence in this research is a multidimensional construct consisting of three dimensions: actual, ideal and social self-congruence. The items for these are adapted from previous studies (e.g. Sirgy *et al.*, 1997; Malär *et al.*, 2011). In the questionnaire, the participants will read a scenario-like paragraph before answering the questions on self-congruence:

“Take a moment to think about your favourite brand. Think about the kind of person who typically uses [this brand]. Imagine this person in your mind and then describe this person using one or more personal adjectives such as, stylish, classy, masculine, sexy, old, athletic, or whatever personal adjectives you can use to describe the typical user of [this brand].”

After they read the instruction, they will mark their response on a 7-point Likert scale from “strongly disagree” (1) to “strongly agree” (7). The items can be seen in the Table 6.2 below.

Table 6.2 Scale Items for Self-Congruence

Dimension	Items
Actual	This [brand] is consistent with how I see myself. This [brand] is a mirror image of me. This [brand] is similar to me.
Ideal	This [brand] is a mirror image of the person I would like to be. This [brand] is similar to the person I would like to be. This [brand] is consistent with how I would like to be.
Social	The typical user of this [brand] is very much like how other people see me. The typical user of this [brand] is consistent with how other people see me. The typical user of this [brand] has a similar image with how other people see me.

Brand Experience

Following Brakus *et al.* (2009), brand experience is operationalised as a multidimensional construct, consisting of four dimensions: sensory, affective, behavioural, and intellectual brand experience. Respondents will evaluate the items on a 7-point Likert scale from “strongly disagree” (1) to “strongly agree” (7). The items can be seen in the Table 6.3 below.

Table 6.3 Scale Items for Brand Experience

Dimension	Items
Sensory	[This brand] makes a strong impression on my visual sense or other senses (e.g. touch and feel of the products). I find [this brand] interesting in a sensory way (e.g. visually appealing). [This brand] does not appeal to my senses (reversed).
Affective	[This brand] induces feelings and sentiments. I do not have strong emotions for [this brand] (reversed). [This brand] is an emotional brand.
Behavioural	[This brand] makes me feel like engaging in physical actions (e.g. work out). [This brand] results in physical experiences (e.g. feel powerful). [This brand] is not action oriented (e.g. stimulate to act) (reversed).
Intellectual	I engage in a lot of thinking when I encounter [this brand]. [This brand] stimulates my curiosity and problem solving. [This brand] does not make me think (reversed).

Brand Responsiveness

For measuring responsiveness of the brand, three dimensions will be used: autonomy, relatedness and competence. The items are adapted from Thomson (2006) and La Guardia *et al.* (2000). All of the items will be measured on a 7-point Likert scale from “strongly disagree” (1) to “strongly agree” (7). The items can be seen in the Table 6.4 below.

Table 6.4 Scale Items for Brand Responsiveness

Dimension	Items
Autonomy	When using [this brand]. I feel controlled and pressured to act in certain ways (reversed). When using [this brand], I feel free to be who I am. When using [this brand], I have a say in what happens and can voice my opinion.
Relatedness	When using [this brand], I feel cared about. I feel a lot of closeness with this [brand]. When using [this brand], I often feel remote in my relationship with this [brand] (reversed).
Competence	When using [this brand], I feel very capable and effective. When using [this brand], I feel inadequate (reversed). When using [this brand], I feel like a competent person.

CSR Beliefs

CSR beliefs are measured using three items adapted from Du *et al.* (2007) and Vlachos and Vrechopoulous (2012) on a 7-point Likert scale from “strongly disagree (1)” to “strongly agree (7)”. The items can be seen in the Table 6.5 below.

Table 6.5 Scale Items for CSR Beliefs

Items
[This brand] is a socially responsible brand.
This [brand] cares for the environment.
This [brand] cares for its employees.
[This brand] has made a real difference through its socially responsible actions.

Brand Attachment

For the measurement of brand attachment, the scale of Park *et al.* (2010) will be used. Brand attachment will be assessed by two constructs, brand-self connection and brand prominence. Participants will evaluate on 11-point scales from “not at all” (0) to “completely” (10). The items can be seen in the Table 6.6 below.

Table 6.6 Scale Items for Brand Attachment

Dimension	Items
Brand-self connection	To what extent is [this brand] part of you and who you are? To what extent do you feel that you are personally connected to [this brand]? To what extent do you feel emotionally bonded to [this brand]? To what extent does [this brand] say something to other people about who you are?
Brand prominence	To what extent are your thoughts and feelings toward [this brand] often automatic, coming to mind seemingly on their own? To what extent do your thoughts and feelings toward [this brand] come to you naturally and instantly? To what extent does the word [this brand] automatically evoke many good thoughts about the past, present, and future? To what extent to you have many thoughts about [this brand]?

Brand Loyalty

Brand loyalty is measured through intention to purchase and intention to recommend. Intention to purchase is measured using three items adapted from various studies (e.g. Yim *et al.*, 2008; Chaudhuri & Holbrook, 2001) on a 7-point Likert scale from “not very likely (1)” to “very likely (7)”. Intention to recommend is measured using three items adapted from various studies (e.g. Zeithaml *et al.*, 1996; Kuenzel & Haliday, 2008) on a 7-point Likert scale from “not very likely (1)” to “very likely (7)”. The items can be seen in the Table 6.7 below.

Table 6.7 Scale Items for Brand Loyalty

Items
[This brand] is the only brand of this product category that I will buy.
I will continue to purchase [this brand] even if it increases price.
I intend to keep purchasing [this brand].
I will recommend [this brand] to someone who seeks my advice.
I say positive things about [this brand] to other people unprompted.
I intend to encourage other people to buy [this brand].

Resilience to Negative Information

Resilience to negative information is measured using items adapted from Bhattacharya and Sen (2003) and Xie and Peng (2009) on a 7-point Likert scale from “not very likely (1)” to “very likely (7)”. The items can be seen in the Table 6.8 below.

Table 6.8 Scale Items for Resilience to Negative Information

Items
I forgive [this brand] when it makes mistakes.
I will forgive [this brand] for [specific negative information].
Given [this brand's] mistakes, I would condemn it (reversed).
I would think favourably of [this brand] upon hearing (specific negative information).

Attachment Style

Consumer's attachment style will be assessed using the scale of Mende and Bolton (2011). The measurement will assess consumer attachment anxiety and consumer attachment avoidance. Participants will evaluate eight items for consumer attachment style on a 7-point Likert scale from “strongly disagree” (1) to “strongly agree” (7). The items can be seen in the Table 6.9 below.

Table 6.9 Scale Items for Attachment Style

Dimension	Items
Anxiety	I worry about being abandoned by [this brand] as a consumer. [This brand] changes how it treats me for no apparent reason. I worry that [this brand] doesn't really like me as a consumer. I worry that [this brand] doesn't care about me as much as I care about [this brand].
Avoidance	I am comfortable having a close relationship with [this brand]. (reversed) It is a comfortable feeling to depend on [this brand]. (reversed) It's easy for me to feel warm and friendly toward [this brand]. (reversed) It helps to turn to [this brand] in times of need. (reversed)

6.7 Pilot Testing

In order to make sure that the research questionnaire does not have any visible problems, pilot testing was conducted. The purpose of pre-testing the questionnaire on a small sample of participants is to improve the questionnaire by identifying and eliminating potential problems (Malhotra, 2010). The pilot testing of the research questionnaire was conducted in Oxford in spring, 2013.

Ten respondents were recruited for the pilot testing. It is important to make sure that the respondents in the pre-testing are from the same population (Malhotra, 2010). These respondents were considered appropriate since the actual survey planned to be conducted in the UK and anyone could act as a respondent. Among these respondents, six of them are males (60%) and five of them are British (50%). The age group varied from 16-24 years old up to 44-54 years old and the income group varied from less than £10,000 up to £60,000 – £79,999. These demographics are displayed to show diversity in the respondents participated. These participants can be considered to be representative of the research population – 51% were female, 65% were in the age of 16-64 years old, and the average income was £23,200 (ONS, 2013a, 2013b).

According to Malhotra (2010), in pre-testing, all features of the questionnaire, such as question content, wording, sequence, form and layout, question difficulty and instructions should be tested. For each of the respondents, time indicating when they started and finished filling in the questionnaire was recorded. The shortest time period to complete the questionnaire was nine minutes and the longest time period to complete the questionnaire was 26 minutes. On average, respondents spent 17.9 minutes completing the survey. In order to test the features in the questionnaire, a short-interview (approximately 10-15 minutes) was conducted after the respondent had completed the questionnaire, following Malhotra's (2010) suggestion regarding the best way to conduct pre-testing being through personal interviews. As a guideline, the questions being asked in the pilot testing can be seen in Table 6.10.

Table 6.10 Sample Questions in the Pilot-testing

1. Were any questions repetitive or duplicating?
2. Which questions were confusing?
3. Were there any uncomfortable issues being asked?
4. Which questions would you change?
5. Was anything missing?
6. Which questions were surprising or excited you?

Based on these responses, the research questionnaire was refined (see Appendix 5). The modifications include changing the wording in the directions, adding categories to closed questions, adding options to be able to choose more than one answer, clarifying the question content and revamping the wording in the scale-item questions. Not only that, the layout (including the font style and size) of the questionnaire was being refined in order for it to be visually pleasing and easy to read.

6.8 Sample

According to Malhotra (2010), population refers to the aggregate of all the elements that comprise the universe and share some common set of characteristics for the purposes of the research problem, whereas a sample refers to a subgroup of the population selected to participate in the research. He indicates that the compilation of objects or elements that retain the information about which inferences are to be made is being called the target population. In this study, the target population is consumers within United Kingdom (UK).

Sample size has been defined as the number of elements to be included in the study (Malhotra, 2010). In order to determine the sample size, several factors need to be put under considerations, for instance the nature of the research (e.g. exploratory study) and the analysis techniques (e.g. multivariate techniques) (Malhotra, 2010). Hair *et al.* (2010) indicate that sample size plays a substantial impact in achieving statistical significance. In details, these authors note that for smaller samples, the sophistication and complexity of the multivariate technique may easily result in either (1) too little statistical power for the test to realistically identify significant results, or (2) too easily over-fitting the data such that the results are artificially good because they fit the sample yet provide no generalisability.

Malhotra (2010) provides a guideline on a test-marketing study by indicating that a minimum sample of 200 respondents is needed and the typical range is from 300 to 500 respondents. Concurrently, Hair *et al.* (2010) set up a precaution indicating that sample sizes that exceed 400 respondents need further examination on all significant results since it may be due to the increased statistical power from the sample size. On the account of these, the sample size for this study is determined to be within the range of 200-400 respondents. However, judging by the guideline that larger samples are needed to obtain more precise information (Malhotra, 2010), the study aims to gather at least 300 respondents.

According to Malhotra (2010), there are two major types of sampling design: (1) probability sampling and (2) nonprobability sampling. Probability sampling refers to a condition when “the elements in the population have some known, nonzero chance or probability of being selected as sample subjects”, whereas nonprobability sampling refers to a condition when “the elements do not have a known or predetermined chance of being selected as subjects” (Sekaran & Bougie, 2013, p.245).

The probability sampling techniques include (Sekaran & Bougie, 2013):

1. Simple random sampling.
2. Systematic sampling.
3. Stratified random sampling.
4. Cluster sampling.
5. Area sampling.
6. Double sampling.

The nonprobability sampling techniques include (Sekaran & Bougie, 2013):

1. Convenience sampling.
2. Judgment sampling.
3. Quota sampling.

Convenience sampling was used in this study since it has been considered as the least expensive and least time consuming (Malhotra, 2010). It is also choose the most easily attainable members as subjects (Sekaran & Bougie, 2013). The demographic profile of the

participants will be compared with the demographic profile of the population. The data were collected from areas surrounding Oxford, located in the Southeast of the UK, using mail survey. The Southeast region of the UK has been considered to include the most demographically diverse residents of the UK population (Ahn *et al.*, 2013). Although convenience sampling was used, a reasonable attempt was also made to simulate probability sampling by selecting a variety of locations (e.g. different housing areas), following the approach of Ekinici *et al.* (2013). Moreover, the Internet survey was advertised in different locations of the UK using several platforms (e.g. Craigslist, DailyInfo), ranging from Aberdeen to Sheffield. In addition, the advertisement was announced on several different days.

6.9 Data Collection Procedure

There are several survey methods that can be chosen; for instance mall-intercept or mail. A mail survey has been chosen for collecting data from the respondents, in this research, because the mall-intercept method has been tried and received unfavourable response. A mail package in an envelope has been prepared, containing the participant information sheet, the questionnaire and a return pre-paid envelope. The main study was conducted in a town in the south of UK, involved in dropping in 2500 mail questionnaires at different housing areas.

The data collection was done in May up until June 2013. From this period of data collection, 135 questionnaires were returned, yielding a 5.4% response rate. This has not fulfilled the target sample size that has been determined for the study. Accordingly, a second period of data collection needed to be conducted. Before conducting the second period of data collection, the responses from the first period of data collection were analysed for their reliability.

Cronbach's alpha statistic and item-to-total correlation were used to assess the reliability of the scales. According to Hair *et al.* (2010), the scale is reliable if the item-to-total correlations exceed 0.5. Adjacent to that, Cronbach's alpha that exceed 0.6 means the scales produce satisfactory internal consistency reliability (Malhotra, 2010). From analysing these, there was an item dropped from the questionnaire. The item is from the construct 'resilience to negative information' (Given [this brand's] mistakes, I would condemn it).

Apart from that, efforts have been made to increase the response rate through adjusting the design of the questionnaire. According to Dillman (2000), there are several unacceptable questionnaire formats, which include: (1) printing on both sides, (2) printing of pages in a landscape orientation, (3) using unusual folds, and (4) using unusual shapes. On the account of these, the questionnaire has been redesigned and can be seen in Appendix 6. The changes are the elimination of the introduction on page 1, the use of shading, and the use of a double columns layout. It has been noted that location, shape, size, brightness (shading), simplicity and regularity, and consistent figure-ground format make it easier for the respondent to fill in the questionnaire (Dillman, 2000).

Another version of the questionnaire was created: a booklet version based on the latest changes being made to the questionnaire. There are several reasons why a booklet version is used. Dillman (2000) notes several reasons on why a booklet version is preferred, including: (1) the vertical booklet, with pages taller than they are wide, is a standard reading format for most western cultures, booklet formats are handled more or less automatically and usually without error, and (3) the ease of setting up and printing booklets. Concurrently with distributing the questionnaire through mail survey, an online electronic survey was created using Survey Monkey. The decision to include an electronic survey was because of the low response rate received from the first period of mail survey. The link to the electronic survey was advertised through several media, such as: LinkedIn, DailyInfo, Craigslist, Alumni newsletter, Research newsletter, and so forth.

6.10 Data Analysis Technique

The objective of the main study is to test all the hypotheses proposed within the research model. These hypotheses will be tested to understand the associative relationships between brand attachment, its antecedents, and consequences. For this purpose Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) has been chosen to conduct the path analysis. SEM has been chosen over multiple regressions because SEM can be considered as an estimation technique that is appropriate and most efficient for analysing a series of separate multiple regression equations estimated simultaneously, because SEM allows separate relationships for each of a set of dependent variables (Hair *et al.*, 2010). Adjacent to that, SEM has the ability to assess the measurement properties and test the proposed theoretical relationships by using a single technique (Malhotra, 2010) and is considered as the best multivariate procedure (Hair *et al.*, 2010).

Hair *et al.* (2010) provide a guideline for conducting a study using SEM. The Six-stage SEM decision processes are as follows:

1. Define individual constructs
2. Develop the overall measurement model
3. Design a study to produce empirical results
4. Assess the measurement model validity
5. Specify the structural model
6. Assess structural model validity

This study followed Hair *et al.*'s (2010) six-stage SEM decision process. All constructs in the research model have been defined in the literature review chapter and operationalised in order to develop the measurement model. This operationalisation was used to design the survey questionnaire.

6.11 Reliability, Validity and Model Fit

Reliability refers to the degree to which the observed variable measures the true value and is error-free (Hair *et al.*, 2010), or the degree to which a scale produces consistent results whenever repeated measurements are made (Malhotra, 2010). Reliability of a measure indicates the stability and consistency of the instrument to measure the concept (Sekaran & Bougie, 2013). According to Sekaran and Bougie, the tests to assess the stability of measures are test-retest reliability and parallel-form reliability; whereas the tests to assess the internal consistency of measures are interitem consistency reliability and split-half reliability. The most popular interitem consistency reliability test is Cronbach's coefficient alpha. It has been discussed above that whenever the item-to-total correlation exceeds 0.50 or Cronbach's alpha exceeds 0.70, a scale can be considered to be reliable (Malhotra, 2010; Hair *et al.*, 2010).

Validity refers to the extent to which a measure accurately exemplifies what it is supposed to (Hair *et al.*, 2010) or "the extent to which differences in observed scale scores reflect true differences among objects on the characteristic being measured, rather than systematic or random error" (Malhotra, 2010, p. 320). The types of validity are (Sekaran & Bougie, 2013):

1. Content validity.
2. Face validity.

3. Criterion-related validity.
4. Concurrent validity.
5. Predictive validity.
6. Construct validity.
7. Convergent validity.
8. Discriminant validity.

In SEM, there are two types of validity that needs to be assessed: (1) convergent validity and (2) discriminant validity. Convergent validity is “the extent to which the scale correlates positively with other measures of the same construct”, whereas discriminant validity is “the extent to which a measure does not correlate with other constructs from which it is supposed to differ” (Malhotra, 2010, p. 321). Average variance extracted (AVE) can be used to analyse the convergent and discriminant validity. AVE refers to “the variance in the indicators or observed variables that is explained by the latent construct” (Malhotra, 2010, p.725). According to Fornell and Larcker (1981), AVE should exceed 0.50 to achieve a good convergent validity, whereas to achieve good discriminant validity, the AVE should be larger than squared correlation coefficients.

The next step, after checking the reliability and validity of the scales, is to assess the measurement model fit. Hair *et al.* (2010) suggest to check on several goodness-of-fit (GOF) indices in order to know whether the model indicate a good model or not. These fit indices are: (1) Chi-Square (χ^2) GOF (no statistically significant), (2) Goodness-of-Fit Index (GFI) (GFI values should be greater than 0.90), (3) Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA) (RMSEA values should be below 0.08), (4) Normed Fit Index (NFI) (NFI values should be greater than 0.90), (5) Comparative Fit Index (CFI) (CFI values should not be less than 0.90), and (6) Standardized Root Mean Residual (SRMR) values should be below 0.10. However, the Chi-Square (χ^2) fit measure has limitations. It is sensitive towards sample size and the number of observed variables (Malhotra, 2010). Hence, Malhotra suggests that it is appropriate to examine other alternative model fit indexes, such as: GFI (0.90 or greater), SRMR (0.08 or less), RMSEA (0.08 or less), and CFI (0.90 or greater).

After assessing the measurement model fit, the next step is to assess the structural model validity. According to Malhotra (2010) there are three activities involved in assessing the

structural model validity: (1) examining the fit, (2) comparing the proposed structural model with competing models, and (3) testing structural relationships and hypotheses. The fit indices used in assessing the fit of the structural model, is similar with assessing the measurement model. In order to test competing models, a $\Delta\chi^2$ can be used. Support for the structural model is obtained when the $\Delta\chi^2$ test is insignificant (Hair *et al.*, 2010). Afterwards, the individual parameter estimates that represent each specific hypothesis together with the variance explained estimates for the endogenous constructs would be examined.

6.12 Chapter Summary

The chapter started with the introduction of the revised research model based on the findings of the preliminary study. Before the revision, the research model contained six constructs, including: one main focus construct of the study (brand attachment), three antecedents (self-congruence, brand experience, and brand responsiveness), one moderator (attachment style), and one outcome (brand loyalty). In the revised research model, one construct was added as the antecedent (CSR beliefs), and one construct was added as the outcome (resilience to negative information).

The chapter has explained the research design, instrument and procedure of the research. This study follows the descriptive research approach because the objective is to test all the proposed hypotheses within the research model. The constructs in the research model were operationalised and a questionnaire was designed to collect the data. The population of the study is consumers within the UK, and the sample was collected through mail survey in a town which located in the South of UK, with the help of electronic survey.

SEM has been chosen as the analysis tool to test all the proposed hypotheses. SEM was chosen because it has been considered as the best multivariate procedure for testing both the validity and theoretical relationships among a set of concepts represented by multiple measured variables (Malhotra, 2010; Hair *et al.*, 2010). First, the reliability and validity of the measurement will be checked. Following that, the measurement model validity will be assessed, continued by the structural model validity. Afterwards, all the proposed hypotheses will be checked. The next chapter will display the findings and the analysis.

CHAPTER 7

FINDINGS OF THE SURVEY

7.1 Introduction

The research method of the main study has been discussed in the previous chapter. This chapter discusses the analysis of the main study, whereas Chapter 5 summed up the preliminary study. As it has been stated, the objective of the main study is to test the research model and the hypotheses proposed. Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) is used to achieve this objective.

The chapter starts with presenting the descriptive analysis of the demographics. Next, the reliability and validity of the measurement model are measured through Cronbach's Alpha and Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA). The chapter ends with testing the structural model.

7.2 Descriptive Analysis of the Demographics

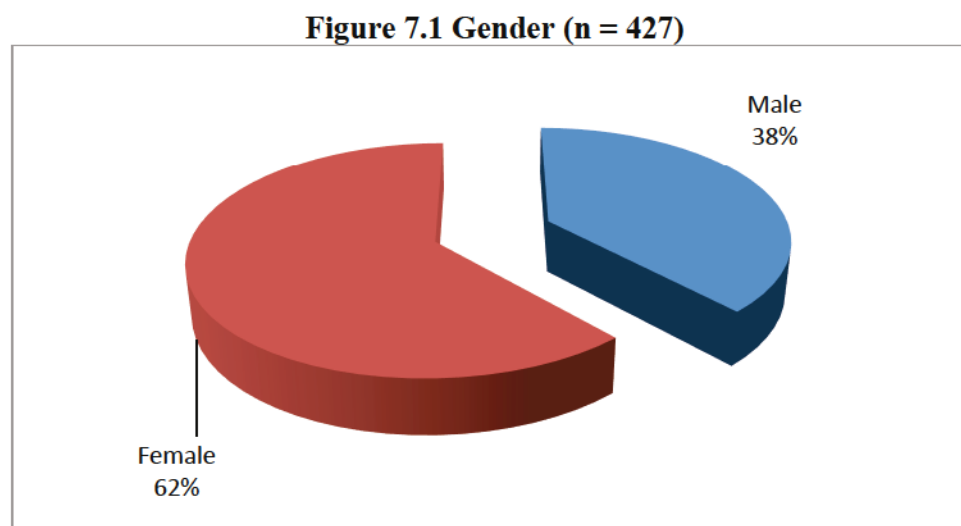
The survey was completed using a questionnaire administered by mail and Internet. In total, 5000 questionnaires were distributed randomly to residential areas in Oxfordshire (Oxford, Abingdon, Kiddlington, etc.). First, 2500 questionnaires were distributed by mail to the residential areas between April and May 2013. 178 questionnaires were returned, yielding a response rate of 7.12%. A second round of data collection in July 2013 was conducted with 2500 questionnaires being distributed to residential areas that were not covered during the first round. In this round, 106 questionnaires were returned, yielding a response rate of 4.24%. 284 questionnaires were gathered from the first and second round of data collection. After checking for the completeness of the questionnaires, 4 questionnaires were dropped because of too many missing values. The response rate from the mail survey overall was 5.6% (280 questionnaires).

In order to increase the number of participants, a multimode strategy approach (Schaeffer & Dillman, 1998) was used. An online questionnaire was created through the help of a web survey company - SurveyMonkey. The structure and questions of the online questionnaire were similar to in the mail survey, except in the mail survey there was one additional question – asking whether the participants were residents of the UK or not. This survey was conducted

in September 2013 and was closed in December 2013. In total, there were 310 respondents to the online questionnaire. However, only 152 questionnaires were used in the analysis after checking for incomplete answers and confirming that they were UK residents. Together with the online questionnaire, a total of 432 questionnaires were overall deemed usable for the analysis. The following is the demographic profile of the sample.

7.2.1 Demographic Profile of the Respondents

Figure 7.1 shows the distribution of respondents' gender (male or female) that participated in the survey.



As can be seen in Figure 7.1, the number of female participants (62%) was higher compared to the number of male participants (38%). Next, Figure 7.2 displays the distribution of the respondents' age group.

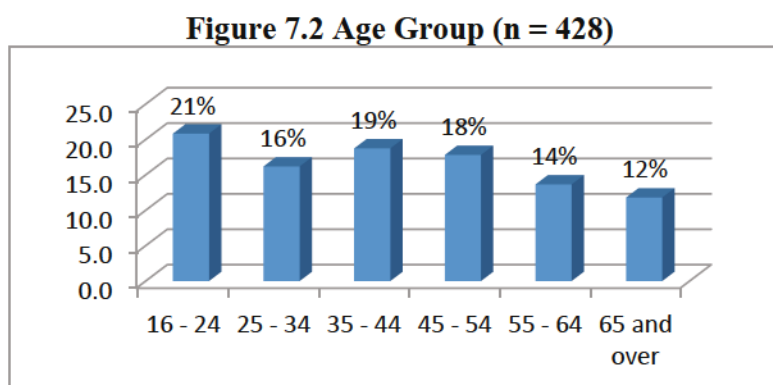


Figure 7.2 displays the sample distribution of the age group, as follows: 21% in the 16-24 age group, 16% in the 25-34 age group, 19% in the 35-44 age group, 18% in the 45-54 age group, 14% in the 55-64 age group, and 12% in the 65 and over age group. Figure 7.3 shows participants' nationality.

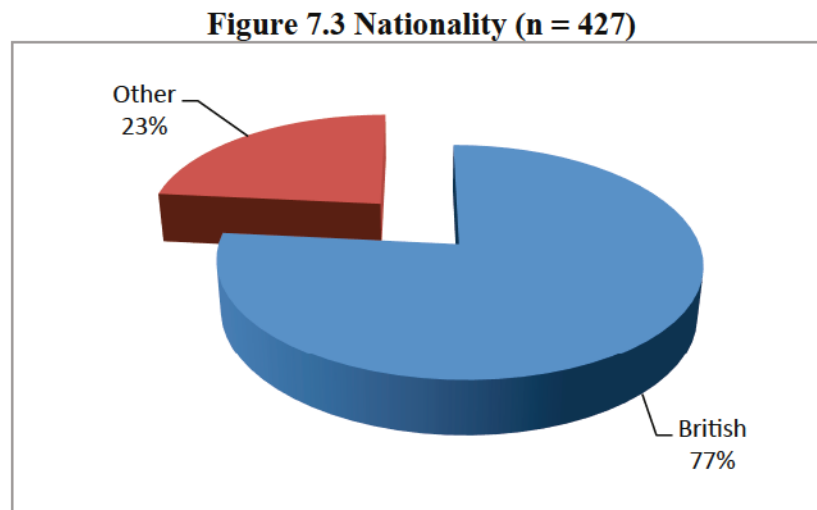
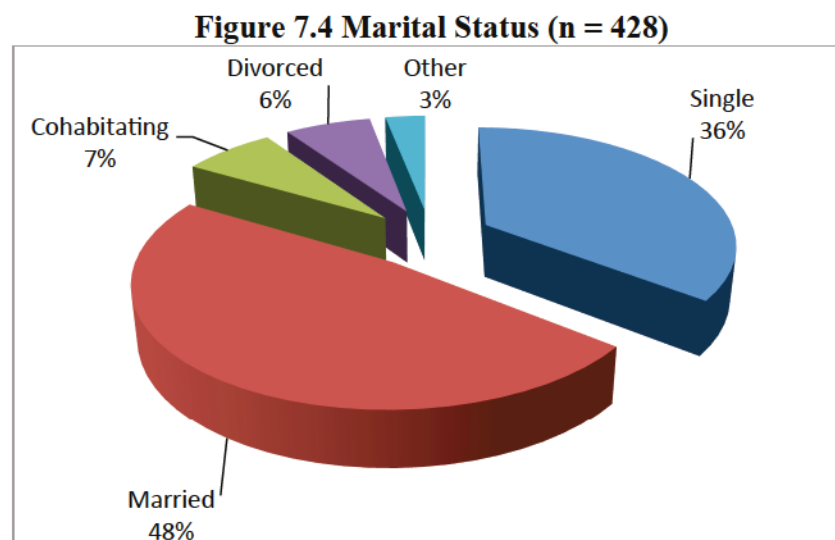
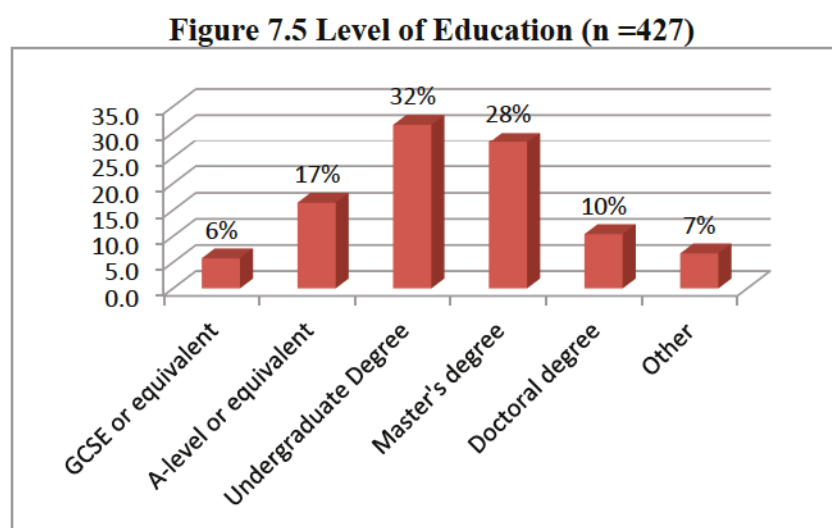


Figure 7.3 presents that as many as 77% of the participants were British. For the non-British (23%), the nationality ranges from Irish, American, and so forth. Figure 7.4 displays the marital status of the respondents.



Based on Figure 7.4, 36% of the participants were single, 48% of the participants were married, 7% of the participants were cohabitating, 6% of the participants were divorced, and

3% of the participants stated other (e.g. widow). Figure 7.5 shows the level of education that the participants have obtained.



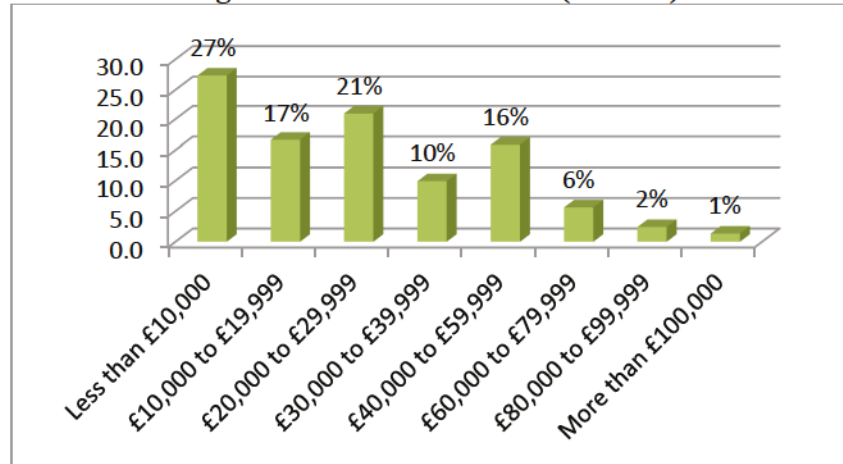
As can be seen in Figure 7.5, in terms of their level of education, 6% of the respondents have GCSE or equivalent, 17% of the respondents have A-level or equivalent, 32% of the respondents obtained undergraduate degree, 28% of the respondents obtained master's degree, 10% of the respondents obtained doctoral degree, and 7% of the respondents answered other level of education (e.g. professional certificate). Table 7.1 displays the occupation of the participants.

Table 7.1 Occupation (n =416)

Classification	Total (%)
Professional	27
Student	24
Managers/Directors/Senior Officials	12
Retired	12
Administrative/Secretarial	8
Associate Professional/Technical	6
Unemployed	1
Other	10

Among them, 27% were professionals (e.g. general practitioners), 24% were students, 12% were managers/directors/senior officials, 12% were retired, 10 stated other occupations (e.g. fundraiser, landlord), 8% were working in the administrative area, 6% were associate professionals/technical, and 1% were unemployed. Figure 7.6 displays the income bracket of the participants.

Figure 7.6 Income Bracket (n = 373)

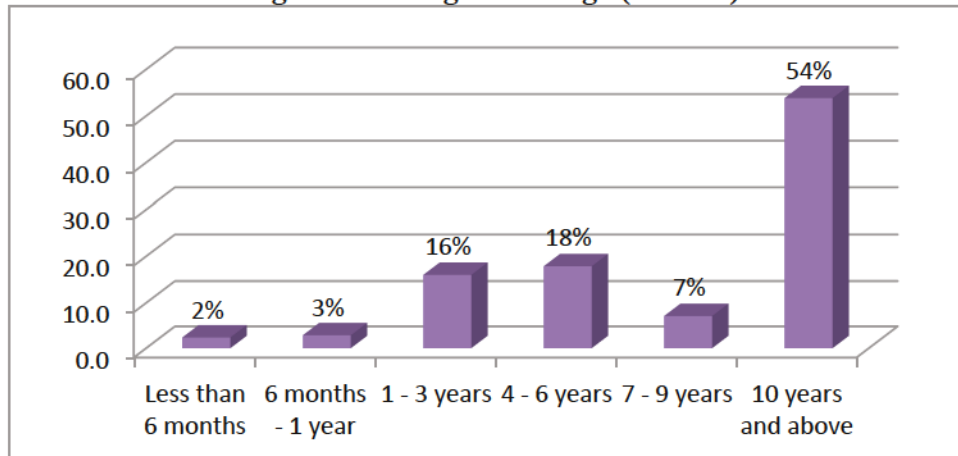


Based on the income (Figure 7.6), most of the participants fell under the less than £10,000 income bracket (27%). The second, third, and fourth biggest fell under the income bracket of £20,000-29,999 (21%), £10,000-19,999 (17%), and £40,000-59,000 (16%) respectively.

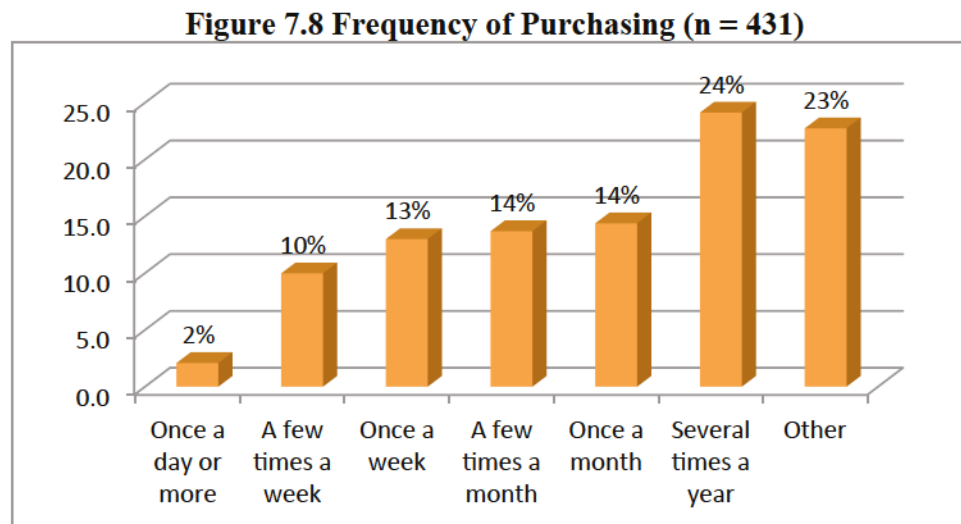
7.2.2 The Brands and Other Profiles

Participants were asked to mention their favourite brand at the beginning of the survey. The brands listed were diverse from a mixed of categories, ranging from electronics (Apple), fashion retailers (Zara), car manufacturers (BMW), airlines (British Airways), food and beverages (Coca-cola) and so forth. Figure 7.7 shows the length of usage that the participants have been using the brand.

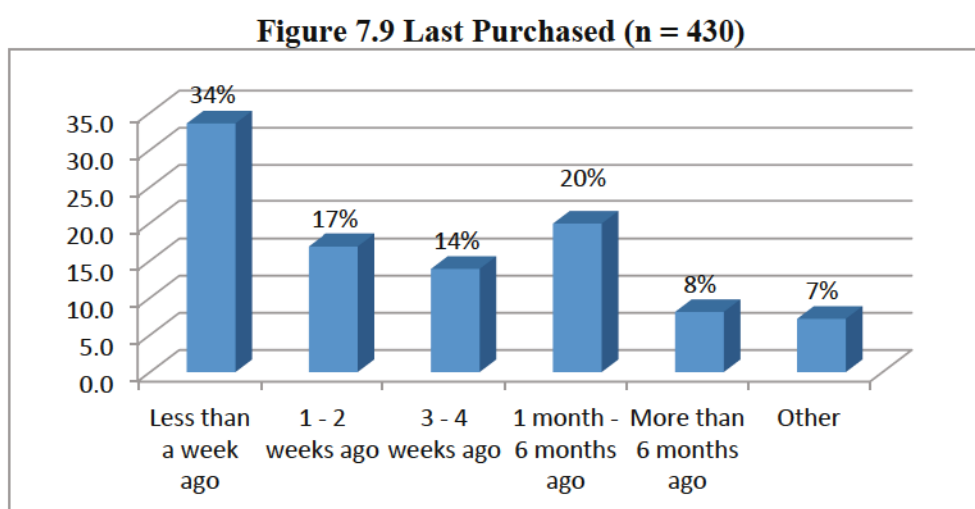
Figure 7.7 Length of Usage (n = 431)



As shown in Figure 7.8, most of the participants (54%) had been using the brand that they chose for 10 years or above. The lowest number of participants in terms of the length of using the brand was less than 6 months, which accounted for 2%. Figure 7.8 displays how frequently the participants were purchasing the brand.



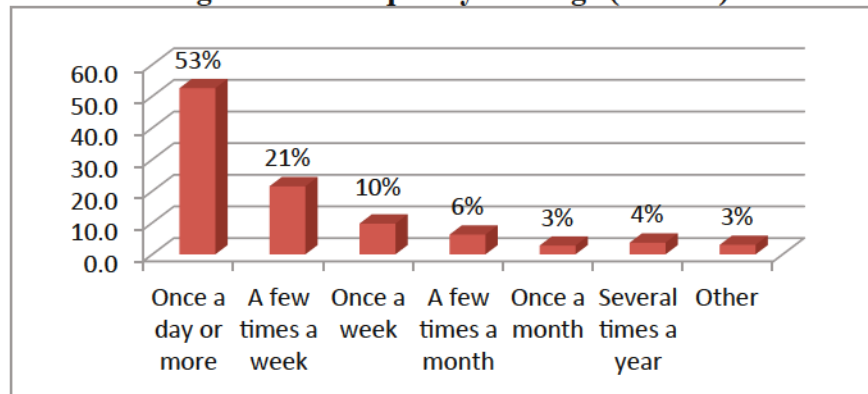
In terms of purchasing frequency, Figure 7.9 shows that most of the participants (24%) purchased the brand several times a year, whereas the frequency of once a day or more was the lowest (2%). 23% of the participants also stated that they purchased the brand other than the categorisation (e.g. once every other years). Figure 7.9 shows the time of the participants' last purchased.



As many as 34% of the participants mentioned that they purchased the brand less than a week ago, 20% of the participants mentioned that they purchased the brand between 1 month and 6

months ago, and 17% of the participants mentioned that they purchased the brand between 1 week and 2 weeks ago. Figure 7.10 indicates the frequency that the participants interacted with the brand.

Figure 7.10 Frequency of Usage (n = 430)



Most of the participants (53%) stated that they used the brand at least once a day or more. In order to know more about the participants, several other profiling questions (e.g. social media user, home owner, etc.) were asked. Table 7.2 exhibits the summary of the questions and answers asked.

Table 7.2 Behavioural Characteristics of the Respondents

Variable	Yes (%)
Regular internet user	96
Up to speed with news/current affairs	83
Experienced shopper	79
Household's decision maker	73
Social media user	70
Shop mainly for those in household	70
Daily viewer of TV	68
Into sustainability	68
Technologically savvy	66
Car owner	65
Home owner	63
Shop mainly for self	59
Set/fixed in your ways/behaviours	50
Frequent flyer/traveller	48
Risk taker	43
Sports club member	41
Into mobile purchasing	39
Frequent cinema-goer	34
Children at home	30
Always want the latest model of a product	17

Most of the participants were experienced shoppers (79%) and the household's decision maker (73%). These participants also owned their own house (63%) and car (65%). Although over half of them perceived themselves as technologically savvy (66%) and most of them used the internet regularly (96%) and were social media users (70%); only 39% of them were into mobile purchasing. Almost half of them (43%) perceived themselves as risk takers and half of them (50%) considered themselves to be fixed in their behaviours.

7.3 Reliability and Validity Analysis

Before analysing the model, a normality test was conducted in order to confirm the normality of the data (Hair *et al.*, 2010). The normality tests were conducted using: (1) the values of skewness and kurtosis, and (2) graphical analysis (normal probability plot). According to Marcoulides and Hershberger (1997), values of skewness and kurtosis in the interval of -1 and +1 indicate univariate normality. The result from both of them suggested that the data distribution was normal. Details on the skewness and kurtosis values can be seen in Appendix 7.

All scales used in this study were gathered from previous studies, as explained in Chapter 6. However, to ensure that the scales are reliable and valid, several tests were conducted. For assessing convergent validity, this study used the rule of thumb that if average variance extracted (AVE) exceeds 0.50 there is support for convergent validity (Malhotra, 2010). For discriminant validity, AVE was being compared to the squared correlations. As suggested by Fornell and Larcker (1981), if the squared correlations are less than the AVE for every construct, discriminant validity is evident. To assess reliability, both Cronbach's Alpha (α) and Composite Reliability (CR) were used. According to Hair *et al.* (2010), reliability is said to be good if these scores are above 0.70.

As many as 1.40% of item responses were missing and replaced with the mean value. At the beginning, multidimensional constructs were assessed through Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA). Following Binz *et al.* (2013), if the result of the CFA does not achieve an acceptable fit, an Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) will be conducted to examine the dimensionality of the constructs. Afterwards, CFA will be applied to validate the operationalisation of the constructs from the result of EFA. In this research, there were four multidimensional constructs, these are: self-congruence, brand experience, brand responsiveness, and brand

attachment. The analysis started with self-congruence and then continued with the rest of the constructs.

Validity and Reliability of The Self-Congruence Scale

Using CFA, the factor loading for each item can be seen in Table 7.3.

Table 7.3 Standardized Loadings for Self-Congruence

Dimension	Item	Factor Loading
Actual	[This brand] is consistent with how I see myself. (ASC1)	0.66
	[This brand] is a mirror image of me. (ASC2)	0.77
	[This brand] is similar to me. (ASC3)	0.86
Ideal	[This brand] is a mirror image of the person I would like to be. (ISC1)	0.78
	[This brand] is similar to the person I would like to be. (ISC2)	0.90
	[This brand] is consistent with how I would like to be. (ISC3)	0.88
Social	The typical user of [this brand] is very much like how other people see me. (SSC1)	0.80
	The typical user of [this brand] is consistent with how other people see me. (SSC2)	0.91
	The typical user of [this brand] has a similar image with how other people see me. (SSC3)	0.87

All of the factor loadings were above 0.50, which indicates that these items retain a degree of correspondence making the items representative of the self-congruence constructs. Table 7.4 displays the results of descriptive statistics and test of validity and reliability of the self-congruence scale.

Table 7.4 Descriptive Statistics, Bivariate Correlations, and Average Variances Extracted for Self-Congruence

	Mean	SD	α	CR	1	2	3
1. Actual	4.35	1.25	0.80	0.81	0.59	0.92	0.84
2. Ideal	4.24	1.47	0.89	0.89	0.96	0.73	0.59
3. Social	4.25	1.34	0.89	0.90	0.92	0.77	0.74

Note: The diagonal values in bold indicate the average variances extracted (AVE). The scores in the lower diagonal indicate inter-construct correlations (IC). The scores in the upper diagonal indicate squared IC (SIC).

From the results, it can be inferred that reliability was achieved because both the CR and Alpha scores were all above 0.70. Next, convergent validity was also achieved because all of the AVE scores were above 0.50. However, discriminant validity was not achieved because

some of the AVE scores were below the SIC scores. In order to deal with this problem, Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) using principal components analysis with varimax rotation was conducted. The result of the EFA indicated that only one component was extracted, indicating self-congruence as a unidimensional construct. Next, the same analysis was conducted to assess brand experience.

Validity and Reliability of The Brand Experience Scale

Table 7.5 exhibits the factor loading of brand experience based on the CFA test.

Table 7.5 Standardized Loadings for Brand Experience

Dimension	Item	Factor Loading
Sensory	[This brand] makes a strong impression on my visual sense or other senses (e.g. touch and feel of the products). (BES1)	0.83
	I find [this brand] interesting in a sensory way (e.g. visually appealing). (BES2)	0.76
	[This brand] does not appeal to my senses. (BES3)	0.50
Affective	[This brand] induces feelings and sentiments. (BEA1)	0.85
	I do not have strong emotions for [this brand]. (BEA2)	0.41
	[This brand] is an emotional brand. (BEA3)	0.66
Behavioural	[This brand] makes me feel like engaging in physical actions (e.g. work out). (BEB1)	0.65
	[This brand] results in physical experiences (e.g. feel powerful). (BEB2)	0.80
	[This brand] is not action oriented (e.g. stimulate to act). (BEB3)	0.21
Intellectual	I engage in a lot of thinking when I encounter [this brand]. (BEI1)	0.43
	[This brand] stimulates my curiosity and problem solving. (BEI2)	0.76
	[This brand] does not make me think. (BEI3)	0.84

The results reveal that some of the items above were not representative of the brand experience construct. The factor loadings of three items were below 0.50. These are BEA2 (0.41), BEB3 (0.21), and BEI1 (0.43) respectively. Table 7.6 displays the results of descriptive statistics and test of validity and reliability of the brand experience scale.

**Table 7.6 Descriptive Statistics, Bivariate Correlations, and Average Variances
Extracted for Brand Experience**

	Mean	SD	α	CR	1	2	3	4
1. Sensory	5.03	1.33	0.73	0.74	0.50	0.75	0.53	0.43
2. Affective	4.33	1.34	0.66	0.69	0.56	0.44	0.60	0.56
3. Behavioural	3.73	1.29	0.54	0.59	0.28	0.35	0.37	0.69
4. Intellectual	3.80	1.44	0.73	0.74	0.18	0.31	0.48	0.50

Note: The diagonal values in bold indicate the average variances extracted (AVE). The scores in the lower diagonal indicate inter-construct correlations (IC). The scores in the upper diagonal indicate squared IC (SIC).

From the results, it can be inferred that reliability was not achieved because several of the CR and Alpha scores were below 0.70. Next, convergent validity and discriminant validity were also not achieved because several of the AVE scores were below 0.50 and some of the AVE scores were below the SIC scores. In order to deal with this problem, Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) using principal components analysis with Varimax rotation was conducted. Following Hair *et al.* (2010), loadings less than 0.40 were not shown and variables were sorted by the highest loading.

Hair *et al.* (2010) suggest to re-specify the factor model. As a result, item BEA3 was eliminated because it loaded on both factor 1 and factor 2 (cross loading). After deleting BEA3, EFA using principle component analysis with Varimax rotation was conducted again to recalculate the loadings. The result of the EFA shows that there were three distinct groups of items. However, the third group consisted of only two items. It has been suggested that a construct is supposed to be represented by at least three items (Bollen, 1989). Following this suggestion, two additional items (BEI3 and BEB3) were deleted, leaving only two factors behind. Table 7.7 displays the final result of the EFA for brand experience.

Table 7.7 Exploratory Factor Analysis of Brand Experience, Varimax Rotation (n = 432)

Item	Factor Loading	
	Factor1	Factor 2
BEB2	.755	
BEI2	.747	
BEI1	.719	
BEB1	.714	
BES1		.821
BES3		.757
BEA1		.726
BES2		.691

Note: Item loadings less than 0.4 were omitted.

The first factor consists of items from two dimensions of brand experience: behavioural and intellectual, whereas the second factor also consists of items from two dimensions of brand experience: sensory and affective. As for now, these two factors will not be renamed since later CFA will be conducted to validate the operationalisation of the construct (Binz *et al.*, 2013).

Validity and Reliability of The Brand Responsiveness Scale

CFA was conducted to assess validity of the brand responsiveness scale. Table 7.8 exhibits the factor loading of brand responsiveness.

Table 7.8 Standardized Loadings for Brand Responsiveness

Dimension	Item	Factor Loading
Autonomy	When using [this brand], I feel controlled and pressured to act in certain ways. (BRA1)	0.32
	When using [this brand], I feel free to be who I am. (BRA2)	-0.71
	When using [this brand], I have a say in what happens and can voice my opinion. (BRA3)	-0.51
Relatedness	When using [this brand], I feel cared about. (BRR1)	-0.66
	I feel a lot of closeness with [this brand]. (BRR2)	-0.65
	When using [this brand], I often feel remote in my relationships. (BRR3)	0.26
Competence	When using [this brand], I feel very capable and effective. (BRC1)	0.83
	When using [this brand], I feel inadequate. (BRC2)	-0.12
	When using [this brand], I feel like a competent person. (BRC3)	0.75

The results display that some of the items above were not representative of the brand responsiveness construct. The factor loadings of three items were below 0.50. These were BRA1 (0.32), BRR3 (0.26), and BRC2 (0.12) respectively. Table 7.9 displays the results of descriptive statistics and test of validity and reliability of the brand responsiveness scale.

Table 7.9 Descriptive Statistics, Bivariate Correlations, and Average Variances Extracted for Brand Responsiveness

	Mean	SD	α	CR	1	2	3
1. Autonomy	4.50	1.03	0.09	0.28	0.29	1.06	-1.02
2. Relatedness	4.66	0.99	0.15	0.34	1.13	0.31	-0.88
3. Competence	4.98	1.04	0.43	0.55	1.03	0.77	0.42

Note: The diagonal values in bold indicate the average variances extracted (AVE). The scores in the lower diagonal indicate inter-construct correlations (IC). The scores in the upper diagonal indicate squared IC (SIC).

From the results, it can be inferred that validity and reliability were not achieved because the CR and Alpha scores were all below 0.70 and the AVE scores were below 0.50. In order to deal with this problem, Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) using principal components analysis with Varimax rotation was conducted. Following Hair *et al.* (2010), loadings less than .40 were not shown and variables were sorted by highest loading. Table 7.10 display the result of the EFA.

Table 7.10 Exploratory Factor Analysis of Brand Responsiveness, Varimax Rotation (n = 432)

Item	Factor Loading	
	Factor1	Factor 2
BRA2	.821	
BRC1	.806	
BRC3	.773	
BRR2	.723	
BRR1	.686	
BRA3	.598	
BRC2		.852
BRR3		.794
BRA1		.696

Note: Item loadings less than 0.4 were omitted.

The result of the EFA shows that there were two distinct groups of items. The first factor consisted of six items and the second factor consisted of three items. It should be noted that the second factor consists of reverse coded items. Similar to brand experience scale, renaming these two factors will not be conducted immediately since CFA will be attended to validate the operationalisation of the construct (Binz *et al.*, 2013). Next, the same analysis was conducted to assess brand attachment.

Validity and Reliability of The Brand Attachment Scale

Table 7.11 exhibits the factor loading of brand attachment.

Table 7.11 Standardized Loadings for Brand Attachment

Dimension	Item	Factor Loading
Self-connection	To what extent is [this brand] part of you and who you are? (BSC1)	0.81
	To what extent do you feel that you are personally connected to [this brand]? (BSC2)	0.87
	To what extent do you feel emotionally bonded to [this brand]? (BSC3)	0.89
	To what extent does [this brand] say something to other people about who you are? (BSC4)	0.71
Prominence	To what extent are your thoughts and feelings toward [this brand] often automatic, coming to mind seemingly on their own? (BP1)	0.82
	To what extent do your thoughts and feelings toward [this brand] come to you naturally and instantly? (BP2)	0.88
	To what extent does the word [this brand] automatically evoke many good thoughts about the past, present, and future? (BP3)	0.77
	To what extent do you have many thoughts about [this brand]? (BP4)	0.78

All of the factor loadings were above 0.50, which indicate that these items retain a degree of correspondence making the items representative of the brand attachment constructs. Table 7.12 displays the results of descriptive statistics and test of validity and reliability of the brand attachment scale.

Table 7.12 Descriptive Statistics, Bivariate Correlations, and Average Variances Extracted for Brand Attachment

	Mean	SD	α	CR	1	2
1. Self-connection	5.20	2.56	0.89	0.89	0.68	0.95
2. Prominence	5.26	2.47	0.88	0.91	0.91	0.66

Note: The diagonal values in bold indicate the average variances extracted (AVE). The scores in the lower diagonal indicate inter-construct correlations (IC). The scores in the upper diagonal indicate squared IC (SIC).

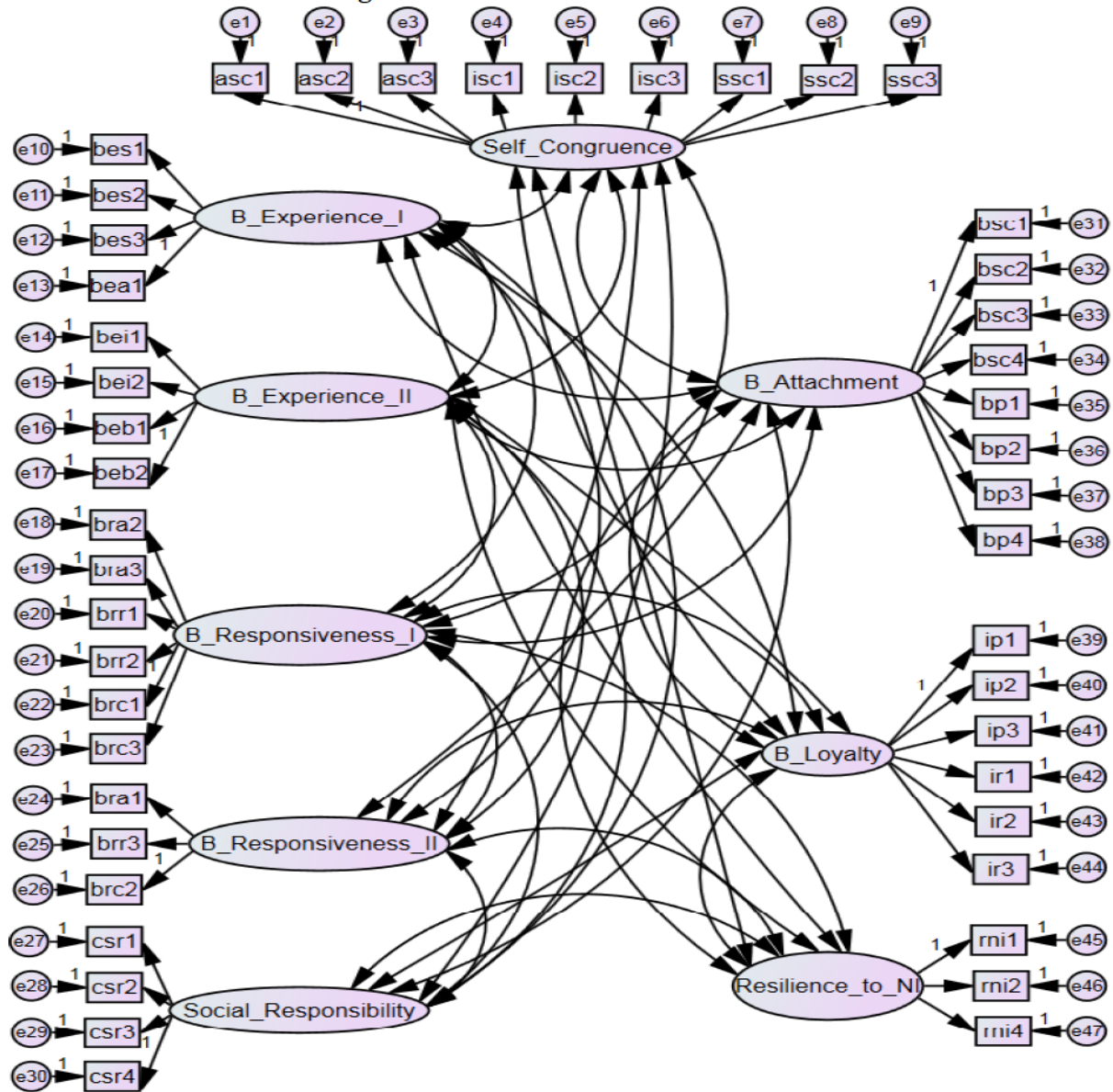
From the results, it can be inferred that reliability was achieved because both the CR and Alpha scores were all above 0.70. Next, convergent validity was also achieved because all of the AVE scores were above 0.50. However, discriminant validity was not achieved because the AVE scores were below the squared correlation. In order to deal with this problem, Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) using principal components analysis with Varimax

rotation was conducted. The result of the EFA indicated that only one component was extracted.

Validity and Reliability of The Measurement Model

After checking all the multidimensional constructs, a measurement model was built in order to ensure that all the scales that will be used in the structural model for hypotheses testing are valid and reliable. The measurement model includes both exogenous and endogenous variables, which are: self-congruence (ISC), brand experience (BE), brand responsiveness (BR), corporate social responsibility (CSR), brand attachment (BA), brand loyalty (BL), and resilience to negative information (RNI). The measurement model can be found in figure 7.11. Using the measurement model, a CFA was conducted again to assess the validity and reliability of the constructs.

Figure 7.11 The Measurement Model



Note: B: Brand; NI: Negative Information

The next step was assessing the measurement model validity through fit indices. Several indices that can be used to determine the validity of the measurement model are (Hair *et al.*, 2010): Goodness-of-Fit Index (GFI) values is supposed to be greater than 0.90, Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA) values is supposed to be between 0.03 and 0.08, Normed Fit Index (NFI) values is supposed to be closed to 1, Comparative Fit Index (CFI) values is supposed to be above 0.90, and Standardized Root Mean Residual (SRMR) values is supposed to be below .1. The measurement model above (Figure 7.11) produced the following goodness-of-fit-measures: $\chi^2_{(998)} = 2859.42$, GFI = 0.77, NFI = 0.78, CFI = 0.84, RMSEA = 0.07 and SRMR = 0.07. These results indicate that the measurement model validity was not good. Table 7.13 exhibits the details on the Alpha, CR, and AVE scores.

Table 7.13 The Measurement Model: Descriptive Statistics, Bivariate Correlations and Average Variances Extracted

	Mean	SD	α	CR	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
1. SC	4.28	1.24	0.94	0.94	0.62	0.14	0.12	0.30	0.00	0.04	0.30	0.05	0.04
2. BE_I	4.95	1.28	0.78	0.79	0.38	0.49	0.32	0.30	0.00	0.01	0.22	0.15	0.04
3. BE_II	3.52	1.41	0.78	0.78	0.35	0.57	0.47	0.47	0.29	0.02	0.25	0.01	0.12
4. BR_I	4.24	1.25	0.84	0.84	0.54	0.55	0.69	0.47	0.07	0.07	0.44	0.15	0.16
5. BR_II	5.66	1.18	0.69	0.71	-0.04	0.03	-0.54	-0.26	0.45	0.00	0.00	0.13	0.04
6. CSR	4.83	1.07	0.84	0.84	0.20	0.11	0.15	0.27	0.02	0.57	0.05	0.08	0.08
7. BA	5.23	2.42	0.94	0.94	0.54	0.47	0.50	0.66	-0.03	0.22	0.66	0.17	0.15
8. BL	5.42	1.01	0.76	0.81	0.23	0.39	0.11	0.38	0.36	0.29	0.41	0.42	0.14
9. RNI	4.15	1.18	0.73	0.75	0.19	0.19	0.35	0.40	-0.19	0.29	0.39	0.37	0.52

Note: SC: Self-Congruence; BE: Brand Experience; BR: Brand Responsiveness; CSR: Corporate Social Responsibility; BA: Brand Attachment; BL: Brand Loyalty; RNI: Resilience to Negative Information; The diagonal values in bold indicate the average variances extracted (AVE). The scores in the lower diagonal indicate inter-construct correlations (IC). The scores in the upper diagonal indicate squared IC (SIC).

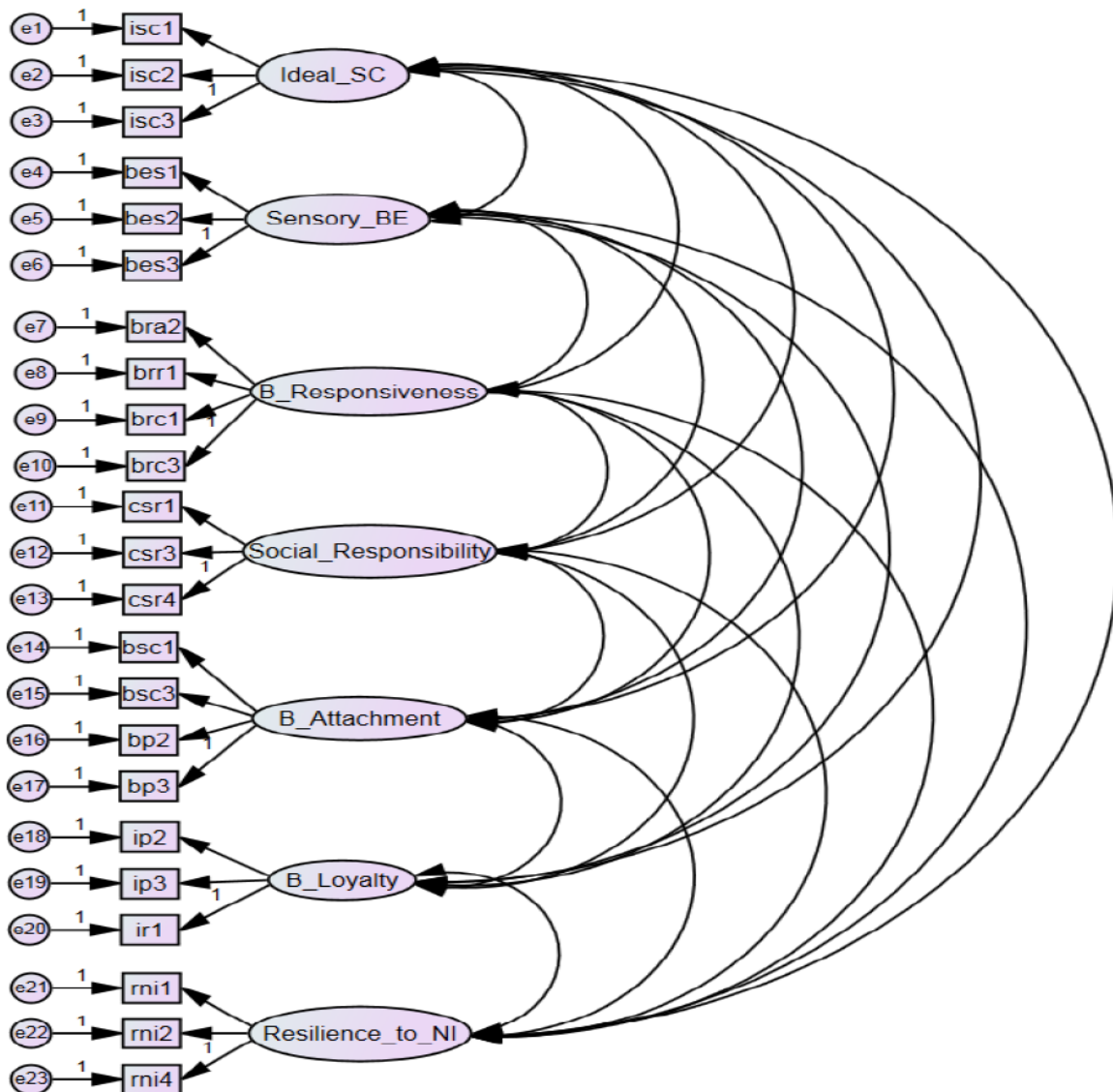
All the reliability scores of the constructs were above the cut-off point (0.70), except for brand responsiveness II (BR_II), which received mixed results. The CR of BR_II was above the cut-off point (0.71). However, the Cronbach's Alpha of BR_II was below the cut-off point (0.69).

Convergent validity was evident for four constructs (self-congruence, CSR, brand attachment and resilience to negative information) since the AVE scores of these constructs were above 0.5. For the five other constructs, convergent validity was not evident because the AVE scores were below 0.50.

The discriminant validity was evident for all of the constructs except for brand experience II (BE_II) and brand responsiveness I (BR_I). As can be seen in Table 7.13, the AVE scores for the other seven constructs were above the SIC. However, some of the AVE scores for BE_II and BR_I were below the SIC, indicating discriminant validity was not achieved.

In order to achieve a good measurement model validity, reliability and validity of each construct, the measurement model was revised. The measurement model was revised through eliminating items one by one with the basis of the factor loadings and modification indices. Figure 7.12 exhibits the final measurement model after the revision.

Figure 7.12 The Measurement Model (Revised)



Note: SC: Self-Congruence; BE: Brand Experience; B: Brand; NI: Negative Information

The measurement model above produced the following goodness-of-fit-measures: $\chi^2_{(209)} = 401.81.81$, GFI = 0.93, NFI = 0.92, CFI = 0.96, RMSEA = 0.05 and SRMR = 0.04. These results indicate that the measurement model validity was good. As can be noted from Figure 7.12, two constructs were eliminated from the measurement model. These constructs were brand experience II and brand responsiveness II.

Apart from the two eliminated constructs, there were two other constructs that received new labels. These constructs were self-congruence, which changed into ideal self-congruence, and brand experience I, which changed into sensory brand experience. These changes were based on the items that loaded into the two constructs. The analysis proceeded in assessing convergent validity, discriminant validity and reliability (Table 7.14).

Table 7.14 The Measurement Model: Descriptive Statistics, Bivariate Correlations, and Average Variances Extracted (Revised)

	Mean	SD	α	CR	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1. ISC	4.24	1.47	0.89	0.89	0.73	0.17	0.28	0.03	0.26	0.03	0.03
2. SBE	5.03	1.33	0.73	0.74	0.41	0.50	0.25	0.00	0.19	0.10	0.02
3. BR	4.32	1.34	0.82	0.82	0.53	0.50	0.54	0.05	0.36	0.05	0.12
4. CSR	4.82	1.08	0.77	0.78	0.16	0.05	0.22	0.54	0.06	0.05	0.08
5. BA	5.42	2.53	0.89	0.89	0.51	0.44	0.60	0.24	0.68	0.12	0.14
6. BL	5.89	1.02	0.80	0.81	0.18	0.31	0.22	0.22	0.35	0.59	0.08
7. RNI	4.15	1.18	0.73	0.75	0.17	0.15	0.35	0.29	0.37	0.28	0.52

Note: ISC: Ideal Self-Congruence; SBE: Sensory Brand Experience; BR: Brand Responsiveness; CSR: Corporate Social Responsibility; BA: Brand Attachment; BL: Brand Loyalty; RNI: Resilience to Negative Information; The diagonal values in bold indicate the average variances extracted (AVE). The scores in the lower diagonal indicate inter-construct correlations (IC). The scores in the upper diagonal indicate squared IC (SIC).

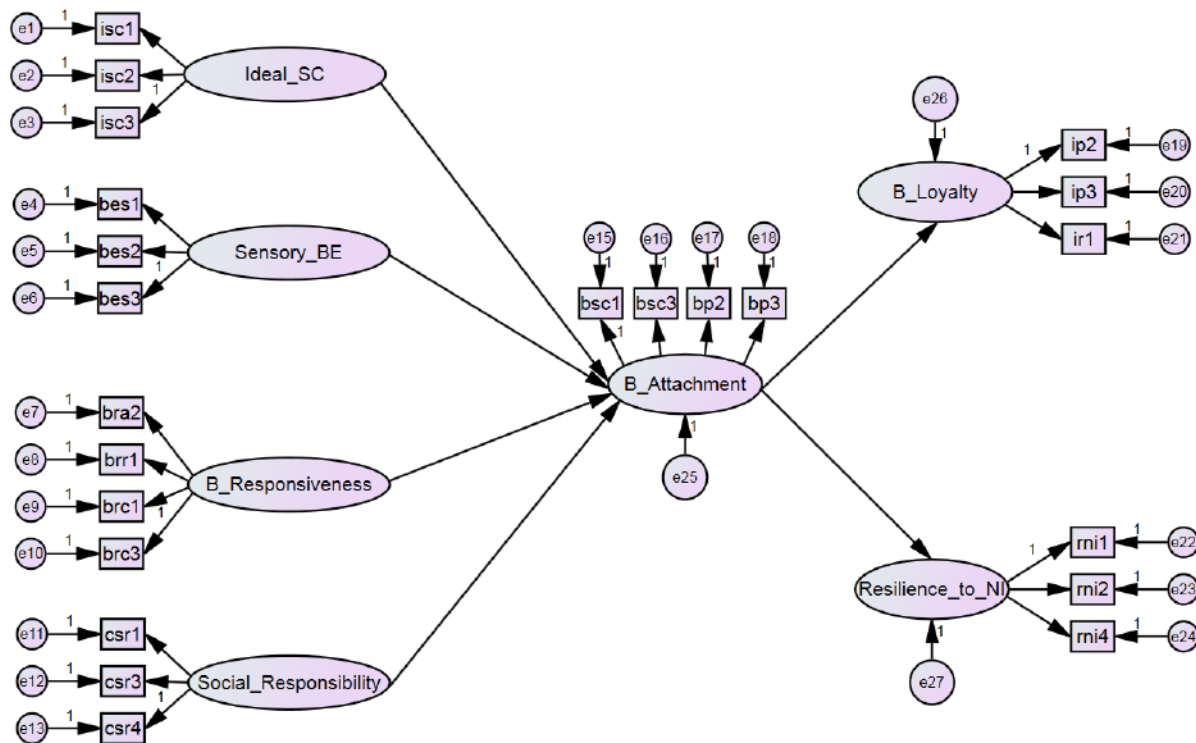
All of the constructs achieved convergent validity since the AVE scores were 0.50 or above. These constructs also achieved discriminant validity since the AVE scores were above the SIC scores. Composite reliability and Cronbach's Alpha indicated that reliability was achieved.

7.4 Validity of the Research Models

Following the measurement model, a structural model was built. The purpose of this research is to investigate the antecedents and consequences of brand attachment. Based on the CFA-EFA-CFA tests (Binz *et al.*, 2013), some of the dimensions within constructs were dropped. For instance, in the self-congruence construct, only ideal self-congruence remains in the research model. Consistent with prior research, self-congruence in this study reflects to the extent to which brand image coincides with consumers' ideal self-image (Nam *et al.*, 2011; Ekinici *et al.*, 2008). In a study, Ekinici *et al.* (2008) display that only ideal self-congruence has a positive influence on consumer satisfaction.

Following previous research (e.g. Chen & Dibb, 2010; Rodgers *et al.*, 2005), the general model without the moderating variable – attachment style – was tested first. This general model was built to test six hypotheses (H1-H6). Figure 7.13 exhibits the structural model of this research.

Figure 7.13 The Research Model I (Full Mediation)



Note: SC: Self-Congruence; BE: Brand Experience; B: Brand; NI: Negative Information

The full mediation model included: ideal self-congruence, sensory brand experience, brand responsiveness and corporate social responsibility, as the independent variables. Brand attachment acts as the mediating variable and two variables (brand loyalty and resilience to negative information) acts as the dependent variable. Before testing the research hypotheses, common-method variance was checked. This is because in a study such as this, where data on both the antecedents and consequences are collected using similar types of response scales (e.g. Likert scales) from the same respondent, common-method variance may pose a problem (Du *et al.*, 2007). Based on previous research (Du *et al.*, 2007; Podsakoff *et al.*, 2003), common-method variance was checked using Harman's single-factor test, which suggests that common-method variance poses a problem if (1) a single unrotated factor solution appears from the EFA test or (2) one general factor accounts for the majority of the covariance among the measures. Based on the data, the unrotated factor solution revealed seven factors with eigen values greater than 1 (see Appendix 8). The result accounts for 71.64% of the total variance, where the first factor accounts for 29.21% of the total variance. This suggests that common-method variance does not pose a significant problem, since there was no general factor in the unrotated structure (Du *et al.*, 2007).

To achieve rigour, the model fit for both mail and Internet surveys were checked. For the full mediation model, the mail survey produced the following goodness-of-fit-measures: $\chi^2_{(218)} = 426.67$, GFI = 0.89, NFI = 0.87, CFI = 0.93, RMSEA = 0.06 and SRMR = 0.06. Concurrently, the internet survey produced the following goodness-of-fit-measures: $\chi^2_{(218)} = 304.17$, GFI = 0.85, NFI = 0.84, CFI = 0.95, RMSEA = 0.05 and SRMR = 0.08. These results indicate that both of the surveys produced good fit. For the partial mediation model, the mail survey produced the following goodness-of-fit-measures: $\chi^2_{(210)} = 399.61$, GFI = 0.89, NFI = 0.88, CFI = 0.94, RMSEA = 0.06 and SRMR = 0.05. Concurrently, the internet survey produced the following goodness-of-fit-measures: $\chi^2_{(210)} = 285.44$, GFI = 0.86, NFI = 0.85, CFI = 0.95, RMSEA = 0.05 and SRMR = 0.07. These results indicate that both of the surveys produced a good fit. The result of the structural equation analyses for full mediation model is exhibited in Table 7.15.

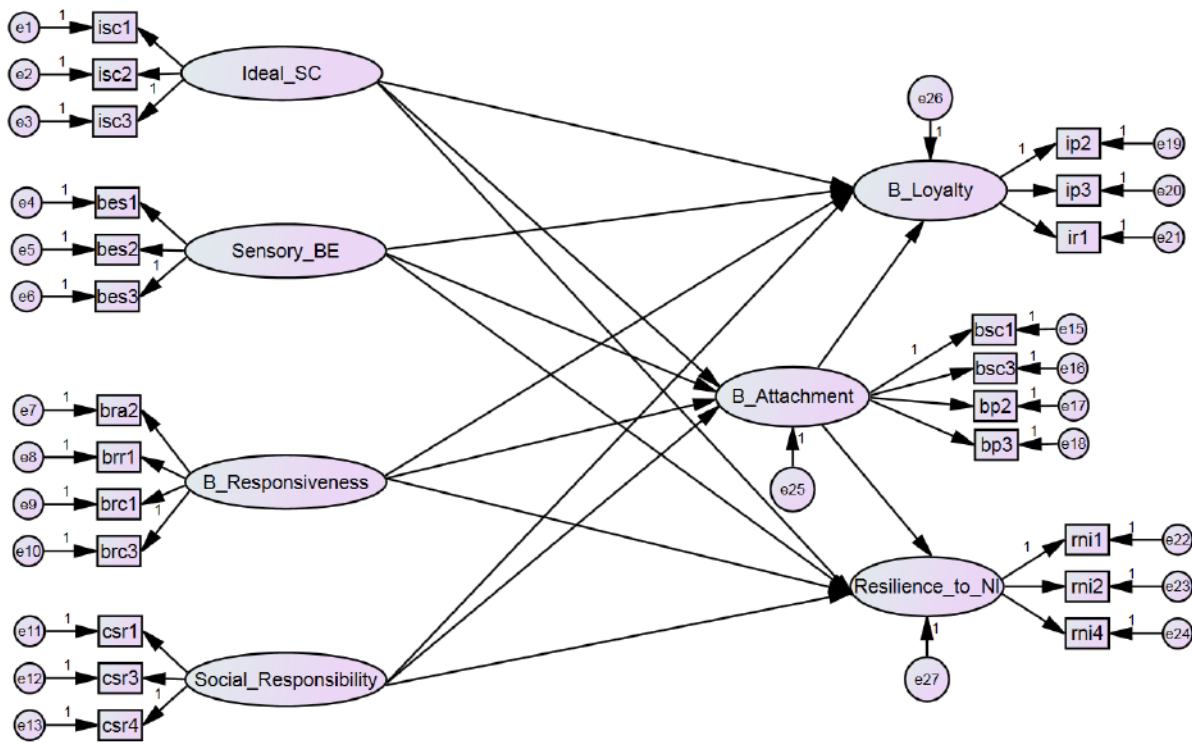
Table 7.15 Result of Structural Equations Analyses for the Full Mediation Model

	Relationships	Full mediation	
		SPC	t-value
H ₁	Ideal Self-Congruence → BA	0.22	4.03**
H ₂	Sensory Brand Experience → BA	0.15	2.56*
H ₃	Brand Responsiveness → BA	0.38	5.78**
H ₄	CSR Beliefs → BA	0.12	2.54*
H ₅	Brand Attachment → BL	0.36	6.28**
H ₆	Brand Attachment → RNI	0.37	6.33**
Model Fit Statistics			
χ^2		442.68	
Df		218	
RMSEA		0.05	
SRMR		0.06	
GFI		0.92	
NFI		0.91	
CFI		0.95	
Variance explained (R ²)			
Brand Attachment		0.44	
Brand Loyalty		0.13	
Resilience to Negative Information		0.14	

Note: SPC: Standardised Path Coefficient; BA: Brand Attachment; CSR: Corporate Social Responsibility; BL: Brand Loyalty; RNI: Resilience to Negative Information; Df: Degrees of freedom; RMSEA: Root Mean Square Error of Approximation; SRMR: Standardised Root Mean Residual; GFI: Goodness of Fit Index; NFI: Normed Fit Index; CFI: Comparative Fit Index; * $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$.

Hair *et al.* (2010) suggest testing a competing model, which represents truly different but highly plausible hypothesised structural relationships, in order to achieve a much closer to a test of competing theories. Following this suggestion, a competing model was created as can be seen in Figure 7.14.

Figure 7.14 The Research Model II (Partial Mediation)



Note: SC: Self-Congruence; BE: Brand Experience; B: Brand; NI: Negative Information

Figure 7.14 depicts the direct relationships between the independent variables (ideal self-congruence, sensory brand experience, intellectual brand experience, brand responsiveness, and CSR beliefs) and the dependent variable (brand loyalty and resilience to negative information). Testing of the research model started with assessing the goodness-of-fit-measures and then continued with testing the hypotheses. The result of the structural equation analyses for full mediation model and partial mediation model is exhibited in Table 7.16.

Table 7.16 Result of Structural Equations Analyses for Full and Partial Mediation Models

Relationships	Full mediation		Partial mediation	
	SPC	t-value	SPC	t-value
H ₁ Ideal Self-Congruence → BA	0.22	4.03**	0.23	4.11**
H ₂ Sensory Brand Experience → BA	0.15	2.56*	0.15	2.50*
H ₃ Brand Responsiveness → BA	0.38	5.78**	0.38	5.70**
H ₄ CSR Beliefs → BA	0.12	2.54*	0.11	2.32*
H ₅ Brand Attachment → BL	0.36	6.28**	0.28	3.66**
H ₆ Brand Attachment → RNI	0.37	6.33**	0.26	3.45**
H _{7a} Ideal Self-Congruence → BL			-0.06	-0.82
H _{7b} Sensory Brand Experience → BL			0.23	3.07**
H _{7c} Brand Responsiveness → BL			-0.06	-0.73
H _{7d} CSR Beliefs → BL			0.17	2.77**
H _{8a} Ideal Self-Congruence → RNI			-0.10	-1.40
H _{8b} Sensory Brand Experience → RNI			-0.03	-0.40
H _{8c} Brand Responsiveness → RNI			0.21	2.51*
H _{8d} CSR Beliefs → RNI			0.20	3.26**
Model Fit Statistics				
χ^2		442.68		407.71
Df		218		210
RMSEA		0.05		0.05
SRMR		0.06		0.05
GFI		0.92		0.93
NFI		0.91		0.91
CFI		0.95		0.96
Variance explained (R ²)				
Brand Attachment		0.44		0.43
Brand Loyalty		0.13		0.18
Resilience to Negative Information		0.14		0.20

Note: SPC: Standardised Path Coefficient; BA: Brand Attachment; CSR: Corporate Social Responsibility; BL: Brand Loyalty; RNI: Resilience to Negative Information; Df: Degrees of freedom; RMSEA: Root Mean Square Error of Approximation; SRMR: Standardised Root Mean Residual; GFI: Goodness of Fit Index; NFI: Normed Fit Index; CFI: Comparative Fit Index; * $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$.

The result of the full mediation model indices supports a good overall model fit ($\chi^2_{(218)} = 442.68$, GFI = 0.92, NFI = 0.91, CFI = 0.95, RMSEA = 0.05 and SRMR = 0.06). The result of the partial model indices also supports a good overall model fit ($\chi^2_{(210)} = 407.71$, GFI = 0.93, NFI = .91, CFI = 0.96, RMSEA = 0.05 and SRMR = 0.05). A χ^2 difference test was conducted to compare the full and partial mediation models (Brown *et al.*, 2002). The result from the χ^2 difference test suggests that the partial mediation model provides the best fit for the data ($\Delta\chi^2_{(8)} = 34.97$; $p < 0.01$).

In order to find out whether brand attachment mediation accounts for a greater proportion of variance explained in brand loyalty and resilience to negative information than does the direct effects of the independent variables alone, hierarchical regression tests (see Appendix 9 & 10 for details) were conducted (Brown *et al.*, 2002). For both brand loyalty and resilience to negative information, the improvement in R^2 from including brand attachment was statistically significant (brand loyalty: $\Delta R^2 = 0.03$, $\Delta F_{1,426} = 16.29$, $p < 0.01$; resilience to negative information: $\Delta R^2 = 0.03$, $\Delta F_{1,426} = 16.59$, $p < 0.01$), which offers support to the inclusion of brand attachment enhances its predictive power.

7.5 Hypothesis Testing: Antecedents and Consequences of Brand Attachment

The findings support H1, which predicts that ideal self-congruence is positively related to brand attachment (SPC = 0.22, $t = 4.03$, $p < 0.01$). This means that greater ideal self-congruence will result in stronger brand attachment.

H2 predicts that sensory brand experience is positively associated with brand attachment, and the results support the prediction (SPC = 0.15, $t = 2.56$, $p < 0.05$). This result indicates that higher sensory experiences with the brand will increase brand attachment.

H3 states that brand responsiveness is positively associated with brand attachment, the results support this hypothesis (SPC = 0.38, $t = 5.78$, $p < 0.01$). The greater the brand's responsiveness through fulfilling consumers' sense of autonomy, relatedness, and competence will increase brand attachment.

The results also support H4, which predicts that CSR beliefs are positively related to brand attachment (SPC = 0.12, $t = 2.54$, $p < 0.05$). This result displays that higher CSR beliefs will result in stronger brand attachment.

H5 and H6 state that brand attachment exerts a positive influence on brand loyalty and resilience to negative information, respectively. The results indicate that both brand loyalty (SPC = 0.36, $t = 6.28$, $p < 0.01$) and resilience of negative information (SPC = 0.37, $t = 6.33$, $p < 0.01$) are positively associated to brand attachment.

Hypotheses H7a through H7d suggest that brand attachment mediates the effect of the independent variables on brand loyalty. The results as shown in Table 7.17 indicate that

sensory brand experience (SPC = 0.23, $t = 3.07$, $p < .01$) and CSR beliefs (SPC = 0.17, $t = 2.77$, $p < .01$) directly influence brand loyalty. These results show that brand attachment partially mediates sensory brand experience and CSR beliefs on brand loyalty.

However, the results display that ideal self-congruence (SPC = -0.06, $t = -0.82$, $p > 0.10$) and brand responsiveness (SPC = -0.06, $t = -0.73$, $p > 0.10$) do not directly influence brand loyalty, which means brand attachment fully mediates the relationships between ideal self-congruence and brand loyalty, as well as the relationships between brand responsiveness and brand loyalty.

Hypotheses H8a through H8d suggest that brand attachment mediates the effect of the independent variables on resilience to negative information. The results as shown in table 7.17 indicate that brand responsiveness (SPC = 0.21, $t = 2.51$, $p < 0.05$) and CSR beliefs (SPC = 0.20, $t = 3.26$, $p < 0.01$) directly influence resilience to negative information. These results show that brand attachment partially mediates the two variables regarding resilience to negative information.

However, the results reveal that ideal self-congruence (SPC = -0.10, $t = -1.40$, $p > 0.10$) and sensory brand experience (SPC = -0.03, $t = -0.40$, $p > 0.10$) do not directly influence resilience to negative information, which means brand attachment fully mediates the relationships between ideal self-congruence and resilience to negative information, as well as the relationships between sensory brand experience and resilience to negative information.

Testing of the Research Model Between Gender

In order to achieve rigour, both the full mediation model and partial mediation model were checked for whether differences existed, by introducing two covariates. The first was based on gender and the second was based on age group. The model fit with gender as the covariate was checked. In the male group, the following goodness-of-fit-measures were produced: $\chi^2_{(218)} = 381.53$, GFI = 0.84, NFI = 0.80, CFI = 0.90, RMSEA = 0.07 and SRMR = 0.08. Concurrently, the female group produced the following goodness-of-fit-measures: $\chi^2_{(218)} = 388.48$, GFI = 0.89, NFI = 0.88, CFI = 0.94, RMSEA = 0.06 and SRMR = 0.06. These results indicate that both of the models produced a good fit. Table 7.17 depicts the differences in variance explained between the two.

Table 7.17 Gender: Result of Variance Explained (R²)

	Male	Female
Brand Attachment	0.46	0.43
Brand Loyalty	0.15	0.12
Resilience to NI	0.13	0.16

Note: NI: Negative Information

There was not a big difference in predictive power towards the three variables between the two. Table 7.18 depicts the results of the structural analyses.

Table 7.18 Gender: Result of Structural Equations Analyses

		Male		Female	
Relationships		SPC	t-value	SPC	t-value
H ₁	Ideal Self-Congruence → BA	0.27	2.59**	0.19	2.81**
H ₂	Sensory Brand Experience → BA	0.22	2.11*	0.12	1.56
H ₃	Brand Responsiveness → BA	0.30	3.11**	0.42	4.75**
H ₄	CSR Beliefs → BA	0.13	1.66*	0.15	2.44*
H ₅	Brand Attachment → BL	0.39	3.98*	0.35	4.87**
H ₆	Brand Attachment → RNI	0.35	3.66*	0.40	5.38**

Note: SPC: Standardised Path Coefficient; BA: Brand Attachment; CSR: Corporate Social Responsibility; BL: Brand Loyalty; RNI: Resilience to Negative Information; * $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$.

Based on the results above, there were not many differences between the two. The only exception was in the relationship between sensory brand experience and brand attachment. In the male group the path was significant, whereas in the female group the path was not significant.

For the partial mediation model, the male group produced the following goodness-of-fit-measures: $\chi^2_{(210)} = 353.57$, GFI = 0.85, NFI = 0.82, CFI = 0.91, RMSEA = 0.07 and SRMR = 0.07. Concurrently, the female group produced the following goodness-of-fit-measures: $\chi^2_{(210)} = 371.62$, GFI = 0.90, NFI = 0.88, CFI = 0.94, RMSEA = 0.05 and SRMR = 0.05. These results indicate that both of the groups produced a good fit. Table 7.19 depicts the differences in variance explained between the two.

Table 7.19 Gender: Result of Variance Explained (R²)

	Male	Female
Brand Attachment	0.46	0.42
Brand Loyalty	0.29	0.16
Resilience to NI	0.24	0.21

Note: NI: Negative Information

There was not a big difference in predictive power towards between the two, except for brand loyalty. The male group model explained 29% of the variance in brand loyalty, whereas the female group model only explained 16% of the variance in brand loyalty. Table 7.20 depicts the results of the structural analyses.

Table 7.20 Gender: Result of Structural Equations Analyses for Full and Partial Mediation Models

Relationships		Male		Female	
		SPC	t-value	SPC	t-value
H ₁	Ideal Self-Congruence → BA	0.28	2.61**	0.20	2.91**
H ₂	Sensory Brand Experience → BA	0.22	2.15*	0.11	1.49
H ₃	Brand Responsiveness → BA	0.30	3.05**	0.41	4.66**
H ₄	CSR Beliefs → BA	0.10	1.32	0.15	2.35*
H ₅	Brand Attachment → BL	0.37	2.80**	0.24	2.52*
H ₆	Brand Attachment → RNI	0.19	1.59	0.29	3.05**
H _{7a}	Ideal Self-Congruence → BL	-0.21	-1.53	-0.03	-0.37
H _{7b}	Sensory Brand Experience → BL	0.32	2.37*	0.21	2.17*
H _{7c}	Brand Responsiveness → BL	-0.15	-1.24	0.02	0.15
H _{7d}	CSR Beliefs → BL	0.30	2.92**	0.08	1.12
H _{8a}	Ideal Self-Congruence → RNI	0.02	0.19	-0.15	-1.82*
H _{8b}	Sensory Brand Experience → RNI	-0.06	-0.46	-0.01	-0.11
H _{8c}	Brand Responsiveness → RNI	0.19	1.62	0.23	2.11*
H _{8d}	CSR Beliefs → RNI	0.28	2.84**	0.13	1.71*

Note: SPC: Standardised Path Coefficient; BA: Brand Attachment; CSR: Corporate Social Responsibility; BL: Brand Loyalty; RNI: Resilience to Negative Information; * $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$.

Based on the results above, there were differences in six relationships. These relationships are: (1) sensory brand experience and brand attachment, (2) CSR and brand attachment, (3) brand attachment and resilience to negative information, (4) CSR and brand loyalty, (5) ideal self-congruence and resilience to negative information, and (6) brand responsiveness and resilience to negative information.

Testing of the Research Model Between Age Group

To test the second covariate (age group) the data was split into two categories: (1) the age of 16-44 and (2) the age of 45 and over. The model fit with gender as the covariate was checked. In the 16-44 age groups, the following goodness-of-fit-measures were produced: $\chi^2_{(218)} = 336.49$, GFI = 0.89, NFI = 0.87, CFI = 0.95, RMSEA = 0.05 and SRMR = 0.07. Concurrently, the 45 and over age groups produced the following goodness-of-fit-measures:

$\chi^2_{(218)} = 374.88$, GFI = 0.86, NFI = 0.84, CFI = 0.93, RMSEA = 0.06 and SRMR = 0.07. These results indicate that both of the models produced a good fit. Table 7.21 depicts the differences in variance explained between the two.

Table 7.21 Age Group: Result of Variance Explained (R^2)

	16-44	45 and Over
Brand Attachment	0.46	0.44
Brand Loyalty	0.08	0.27
Resilience to NI	0.13	0.12

Note: NI: Negative Information

There was a big difference in predictive power towards explaining the variance in brand loyalty. In the 16-44 age groups, only 8% of the variance in brand loyalty was explained; whereas in the 45 and over age groups, 27% of the variance in brand loyalty was explained. Table 7.22 depicts the results of the structural analyses.

Table 7.22 Age Group: Result of Structural Equations Analyses

Relationships	16-44		45 and Over	
	SPC	t-value	SPC	t-value
H ₁ Ideal Self-Congruence → BA	0.20	2.61**	0.19	2.28*
H ₂ Sensory Brand Experience → BA	0.12	1.45	0.21	2.27*
H ₃ Brand Responsiveness → BA	0.47	4.84**	0.31	3.31**
H ₄ CSR Beliefs → BA	0.02	0.33	0.23	3.06**
H ₅ Brand Attachment → BL	0.27	3.63**	0.51	5.82**
H ₆ Brand Attachment → RNI	0.37	4.66**	0.35	3.98**

Note: SPC: Standardised Path Coefficient; BA: Brand Attachment; CSR: Corporate Social Responsibility; BL: Brand Loyalty; RNI: Resilience to Negative Information; * $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$.

Based on the results above, there were two paths between the two groups that were deemed to be different. In the 16-44 age groups the paths between sensory brand experience and brand attachment, as well as CSR beliefs and brand attachment, were not significant; whereas in the 45 and over age groups, the two paths were significant.

For the partial mediation model, the 16-44 age groups produced the following goodness-of-fit-measures: $\chi^2_{(210)} = 307.99$, GFI = 0.90, NFI = 0.88, CFI = 0.96, RMSEA = 0.04 and SRMR = 0.05. Concurrently, the 45 and over age groups produced the following goodness-of-fit-measures: $\chi^2_{(210)} = 357.34$, GFI = 0.87, NFI = 0.85, CFI = 0.93, RMSEA = 0.06 and SRMR = 0.06. These results indicate that both of the groups produced a good fit. Table 7.23 depicts the differences in variance explained between the two.

Table 7.23 Age Group: Result of Variance Explained (R^2)

	16-44	45 and Over
Brand Attachment	0.45	0.43
Brand Loyalty	0.16	0.30
Resilience to NI	0.23	0.23

Note: NI: Negative Information

There was a big difference in predictive power towards explaining the variance in brand loyalty. In the 16-44 age groups, only 16% of the variance in brand loyalty was explained; whereas in the 45 and over age groups, 30% of the variance in brand loyalty was explained. Table 7.24 depicts the results of the structural analyses.

Table 7.24 Age Group: Result of Structural Equations Analyses for Full and Partial Mediation Models

Relationships		Male		Female	
		SPC	t-value	SPC	t-value
H ₁	Ideal Self-Congruence → BA	0.21	2.73**	0.20	2.33*
H ₂	Sensory Brand Experience → BA	0.11	1.36	0.21	2.25*
H ₃	Brand Responsiveness → BA	0.47	4.79**	0.30	3.20**
H ₄	CSR Beliefs → BA	0.01	0.21	0.22	2.91**
H ₅	Brand Attachment → BL	0.20	1.92*	0.41	3.67**
H ₆	Brand Attachment → RNI	0.30	2.80**	0.17	1.56
H _{7a}	Ideal Self-Congruence → BL	0.02	0.18	-0.15	-1.51
H _{7b}	Sensory Brand Experience → BL	0.33	3.10**	0.13	1.21
H _{7c}	Brand Responsiveness → BL	-0.15	-1.21	0.10	0.91
H _{7d}	CSR Beliefs → BL	0.10	1.17	0.17	1.78*
H _{8a}	Ideal Self-Congruence → RNI	-0.26	-2.73**	0.02	0.20
H _{8b}	Sensory Brand Experience → RNI	-0.03	-0.34	-0.00	-0.03
H _{8c}	Brand Responsiveness → RNI	0.30	2.38*	0.18	1.58
H _{8d}	CSR Beliefs → RNI	0.12	1.46	0.27	2.81**

Note: SPC: Standardised Path Coefficient; BA: Brand Attachment; CSR: Corporate Social Responsibility; BL: Brand Loyalty; RNI: Resilience to Negative Information; * $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$.

Based on the results above, there were differences in eight relationships. These relationships are:

1. Sensory brand experience and brand attachment.
2. CSR beliefs and brand attachment.
3. Brand attachment and resilience to negative information.
4. Sensory brand experience and brand loyalty.
5. CSR beliefs and brand loyalty.
6. Ideal self-congruence and resilience to negative information.

7. Brand responsiveness and resilience to negative information.
8. CSR beliefs and resilience to negative information.

7.6 Testing the Moderation Effect of the Attachment Style on the Relationship between Brand Attachment and Brand Loyalty

Research on attachment in the marketing literature was divided into two streams. The first stream focuses on measuring the strength of attachment between the consumer and the brand, whereas the second stream focuses on measuring attachment style. In the effort of combining the two constructs, the present research proposed that attachment style moderates the relationships between brand loyalty and its antecedents.

As has been discussed in Chapter 4, brand attachment and attachment style are two distinct constructs. Attachment style (in particular insecure consumers) activates individuals' hyperactivating and deactivating strategies toward their relationship with brands. When they activate these strategies, they expect the firm and employees behind the brand to increase the efforts to exceed their expectations. The reason behind this is the feelings that they have allocated compelling resources in the relationship. Hence, insecure consumers' expectations become higher. These conditions may weaken their sense of loyalty to the brand. Figure 7.15 displays the theoretical moderation model.

Figure 7.15 The Moderation Model

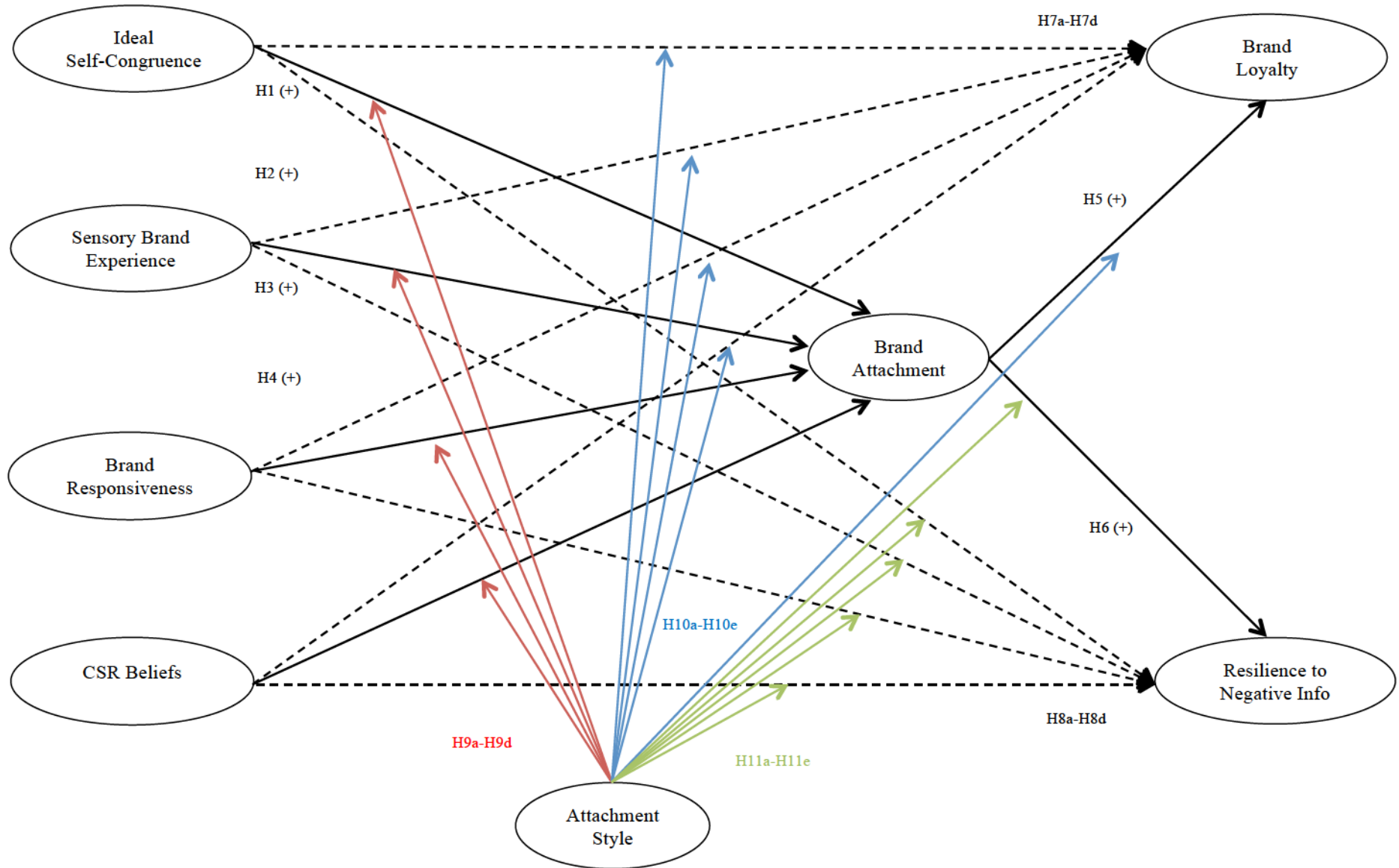


Figure 7.15 depicts that attachment style moderates the relationships between brand attachment with its antecedents and consequences. First, attachment style moderates the relationships between ideal self-congruence, sensory brand experience, brand responsiveness and CSR beliefs with brand attachment. Second, attachment style moderates the relationships between ideal self-congruence, sensory brand experience, brand responsiveness, CSR beliefs and brand attachment with brand loyalty. Third, attachment style moderates the relationships between ideal self-congruence, sensory brand experience, brand responsiveness, CSR beliefs and brand attachment with resilience to negative information. Since attachment style was a multidimensional scale consists of two dimensions (anxiety and avoidance), CFA was conducted to assess the scale.

Validity and Reliability of The Attachment Style Scale

Table 7.25 exhibits the factor loading of attachment style.

Table 7.25 Standardized Loadings for Attachment Style

Dimension	Item	Factor Loading
Anxiety	I worry about being abandoned by this brand as a consumer. (ANX1)	0.55
	This brand changes how it treats me for no apparent reason. (ANX2)	0.65
	I worry that this brand doesn't really like me as a consumer. (ANX3)	0.73
	I worry that this brand doesn't care about me as much as I care about this brand. (ANX4)	0.69
Avoidance	I am comfortable having a close relationship with this brand. (AVD1)	0.38
	It is a comfortable feeling to depend on this brand. (AVD2)	0.73
	It's easy for me to feel warm and friendly towards this brand. (AVD3)	0.65
	It helps to turn to this brand in times of need. (AVD4)	0.68

The results display that only one item above was not representative of the attachment style construct. The factor loading of the item was below 0.50, this was AVD1 (0.38). Table 7.26 displays the results of descriptive statistics and test of validity and reliability of the attachment style scale.

**Table 7.26 Descriptive Statistics, Bivariate Correlations, and Average Variances
Extracted for Attachment Style**

	Mean	SD	α	CR	1	2
1. Anxiety	2.69	1.25	0.75	0.75	0.44	0.01
2. Avoidance	3.10	1.09	0.68	0.71	0.08	0.39

Note: The diagonal values in bold indicate the average variances extracted (AVE). The scores in the lower diagonal indicate inter-construct correlations (IC). The scores in the upper diagonal indicate squared IC (SIC).

From the results, it can be inferred that reliability was achieved because the CR were all above 0.70. However, the Cronbach's Alpha of Avoidance was below 0.70, indicating that reliability was not achieved. Next, convergent validity was not achieved because all of the AVE scores were above 0.50. However, discriminant validity was achieved because the AVE scores were above the squared correlation. Further examination was conducted through Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) using principal components analysis with Varimax rotation. Table 7.27 displays the result of the EFA.

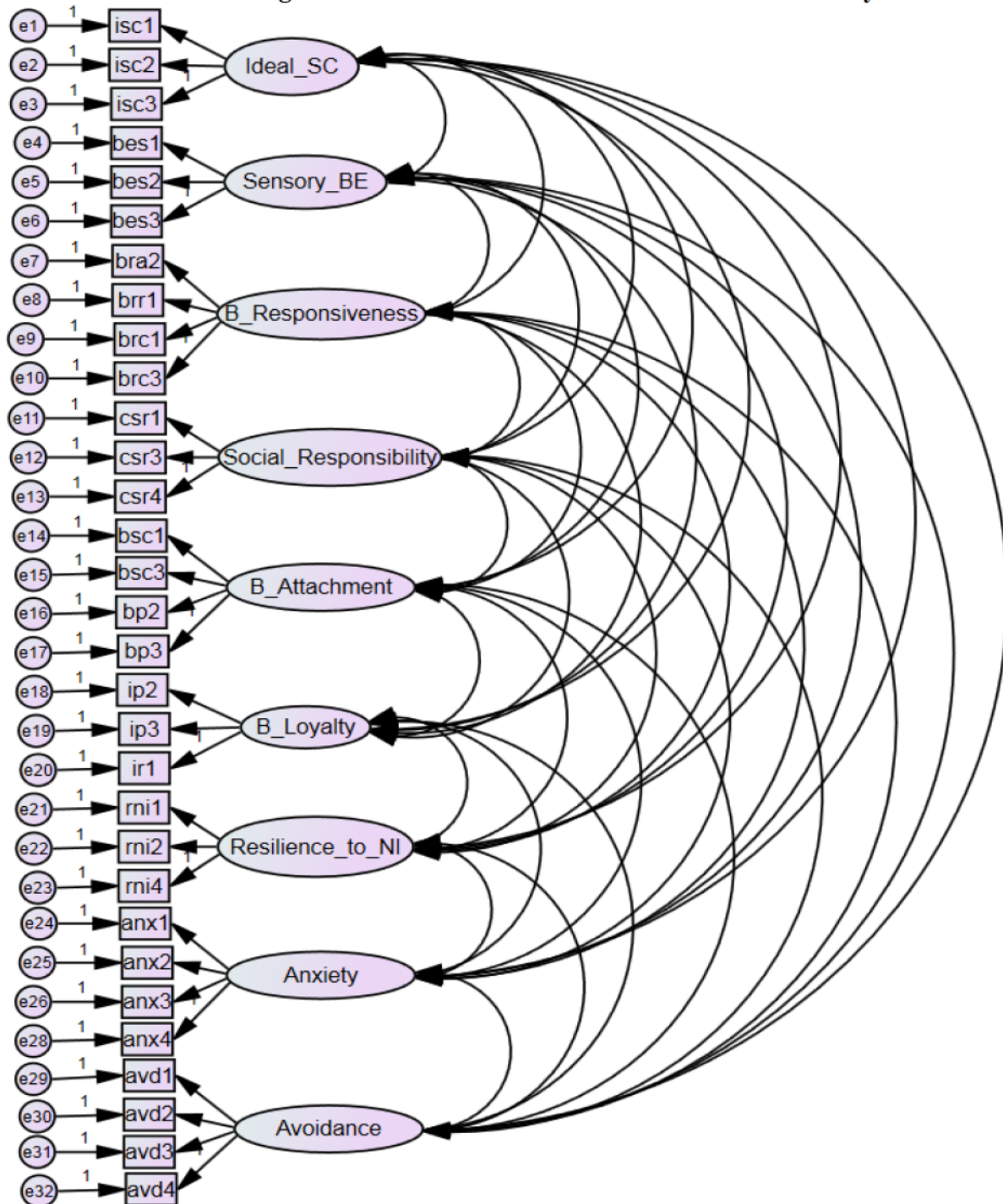
Table 7.27 Exploratory Factor Analysis of Attachment Style, Varimax Rotation (n = 432)

Item	Factor Loading	
	Factor1	Factor 2
ANX3	.788	
ANX2	.761	
ANX4	.756	
ANX1	.658	
AVD3		.774
AVD2		.755
AVD1		.721
AVD4		.594

Note: Item loadings less than 0.4 were omitted.

The result of the EFA shows that there were two distinct groups of items. The first factor consisted of four items and the second factor consisted of four items. Each of the four items loaded exactly towards the intended constructs. Further, a measurement model was built in order to ensure that attachment style scale is valid and reliable. The measurement model can be found in Figure 7.16. Using the measurement model, a CFA was conducted again to assess the validity and reliability of the constructs.

Figure 7.16 Measurement Model with Attachment Style



Note: SC: Self-Congruence; BE: Brand Experience; B: Brand; NI: Negative Information

The measurement model above produced the following goodness-of-fit-measures: $\chi^2_{(398)} = 812.35$, GFI = 0.89, NFI = 0.87, CFI = 0.93, RMSEA = 0.05 and SRMR = 0.06. Although the GFI and NFI values were slightly below 0.90, these results indicate that the measurement model validity was good. The analysis proceeded in assessing convergent validity, discriminant validity, and reliability (Table 7.28).

Table 7.28 Descriptive Statistics, Bivariate Correlations, and Average Variances Extracted

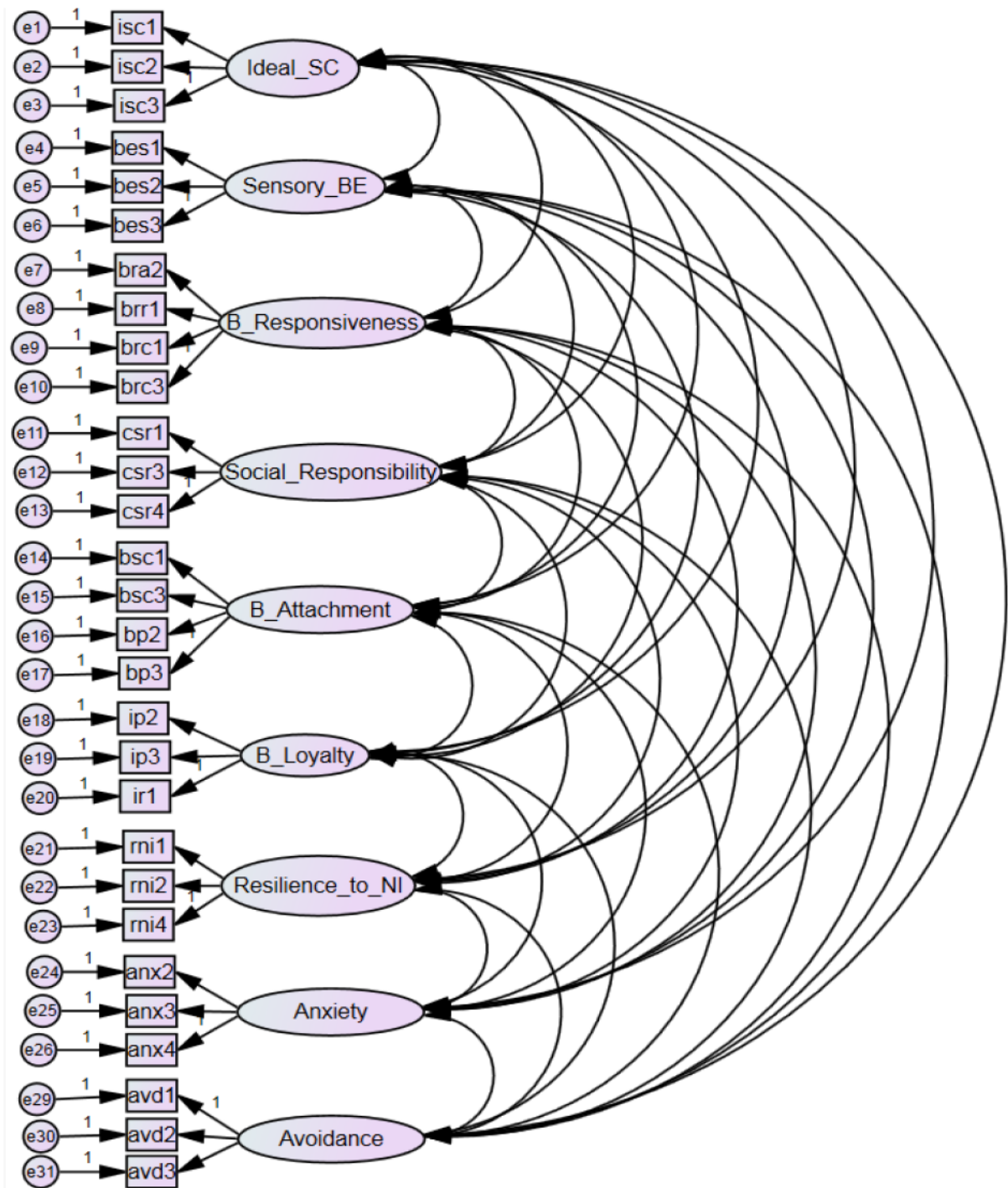
	Mean	SD	α	CR	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
1. ISC	4.24	1.47	0.89	0.89	0.73	0.17	0.28	0.03	0.26	0.03	0.03	0.00	0.14
2. SBE	5.03	1.33	0.73	0.74	0.41	0.50	0.24	0.00	0.19	0.10	0.02	0.00	0.27
3. BR	4.32	1.34	0.82	0.82	0.53	0.49	0.54	0.05	0.36	0.05	0.12	0.03	0.29
4. CSR	4.82	1.08	0.77	0.78	0.16	0.05	0.23	0.54	0.06	0.05	0.08	0.03	0.23
5. BA	5.42	2.53	0.89	0.89	0.51	0.43	0.60	0.24	0.68	0.12	0.14	0.00	0.37
6. BL	5.89	1.02	0.80	0.81	0.18	0.31	0.23	0.22	0.35	0.59	0.07	0.11	0.31
7. RNI	4.15	1.18	0.73	0.75	0.17	0.16	0.35	0.29	0.37	0.27	0.52	0.01	0.12
8. ANX	2.69	1.25	0.73	0.73	-0.01	0.02	0.16	-0.17	0.05	-0.33	0.12	0.43	0.01
9. AVD	3.10	1.09	0.68	0.72	-0.38	-0.52	-0.54	-0.48	-0.61	-0.55	-0.35	0.09	0.39

Note: ISC: Ideal Self-Congruence; SBE: Sensory Brand Experience; BR: Brand Responsiveness; CSR: Corporate Social Responsibility; BA: Brand Attachment; BL: Brand Loyalty; RNI: Resilience to Negative Information; ANX: Anxiety; AVD: Avoidance; The diagonal values in bold indicate the average variances extracted (AVE). The scores in the lower diagonal indicate inter-construct correlations (IC). The scores in the upper diagonal indicate squared IC (SIC).

All the reliability scores of the constructs were above the cut-off point (0.70), except for avoidance (AVD), which received mixed results. The CR of AVD was above the cut-off point (0.71). However, the Cronbach's Alpha of AVD was below the cut-off point (0.68). Convergent validity was evident for seven constructs (ideal self-congruence, sensory brand experience, brand responsiveness, CSR, brand attachment, and resilience to negative information) since the AVE scores of these constructs were above 0.5. For anxiety and avoidance constructs, convergent validity was not evident because the AVE scores were below 0.50.

Discriminant validity was evident for all of the constructs. As can be seen in Table 7.28 above, the AVE scores for the nine constructs were above the SIC. In order to achieve a good measurement model validity, reliability and validity of each construct, the measurement model was revised. The measurement model was revised through eliminating items one by one with the basis of the factor loadings and modification indices. Figure 7.17 exhibits the final measurement model after the revision.

Figure 7.17 The Measurement Model with Attachment Style (Revised)



Note: SC: Self-Congruence; BE: Brand Experience; B: Brand; NI: Negative Information

The measurement model validity through fit indices was assessed. The measurement model above (Figure 7.17) produced the following goodness-of-fit-measures: $\chi^2_{(341)} = 668.17$, GFI = 0.91, NFI = 0.89, CFI = 0.94, RMSEA = 0.05 and SRMR = 0.05. Although the NFI value was slightly below 0.90, these results indicate that the measurement model validity was good. Table 7.29 exhibits the details on the Alpha, CR and AVE scores.

Table 7.29 The Moderation Model: Descriptive Statistics, Bivariate Correlations, and Average Variances Extracted

	Mean	SD	α	CR	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
1. ISC	4.24	1.47	0.89	0.89	0.73	0.17	0.28	0.03	0.26	0.03	0.03	0.00	0.14
2. SBE	5.03	1.33	0.73	0.74	0.41	0.50	0.24	0.00	0.19	0.10	0.02	0.00	0.27
3. BR	4.32	1.34	0.82	0.82	0.53	0.49	0.54	0.05	0.36	0.05	0.12	0.02	0.26
4. CSR	4.82	1.08	0.77	0.78	0.16	0.05	0.23	0.54	0.06	0.05	0.08	0.05	0.03
5. BA	5.42	2.53	0.89	0.89	0.51	0.43	0.60	0.24	0.68	0.12	0.14	0.00	0.36
6. BL	5.89	1.02	0.80	0.81	0.18	0.31	0.22	0.22	0.35	0.59	0.07	0.13	0.34
7. RNI	4.15	1.18	0.73	0.75	0.17	0.16	0.35	0.29	0.37	0.27	0.52	0.01	0.10
8. ANX	2.58	1.28	0.73	0.73	-0.00	0.01	0.13	-0.18	0.02	-0.36	0.11	0.48	0.03
9. AVD	2.81	1.14	0.72	0.72	-0.37	-0.52	-0.51	-0.48	-0.60	-0.58	-0.32	0.18	0.47

Note: ISC: Ideal Self-Congruence; SBE: Sensory Brand Experience; BR: Brand Responsiveness; CSR: Corporate Social Responsibility; BA: Brand Attachment; BL: Brand Loyalty; RNI: Resilience to Negative Information; ANX: Anxiety; AVD: Avoidance; The diagonal values in bold indicate the average variances extracted (AVE). The scores in the lower diagonal indicate inter-construct correlations (IC). The scores in the upper diagonal indicate squared IC (SIC).

Based on Table 7.29, the constructs achieved discriminant validity since the AVE scores were above the SIC scores. Composite reliability and Cronbach's Alpha indicated that reliability was achieved. All of the constructs achieved convergent validity since the AVE scores were 0.50 or above, except for anxiety and avoidance with AVE, scoring of 0.48 and 0.47 respectively. However, this can still be considered to be acceptable because the AVE scores were above the SIC scores and both of the constructs were reliable (c.f. Mende *et al.*, 2013).

It has been proposed that attachment style moderates the relationships between brand attachment and brand loyalty. Previous research conceptualised attachment style to include two dimensions: anxiety and avoidance. To test the moderation effect, anxiety and avoidance were split into high and low, based on the median score. A value of 1 was given to high anxiety and avoidance, whereas a value of 0 was given to the low. Subsequently, attachment style was categorised into secure and insecure attachment style. When anxiety and avoidance were high, the participants were categorised into insecure attachment style. Conversely, participants were categorised into secure attachment style. The moderation effect was tested and as can be seen in Figure 7.18.

Figure 7.18 Results of the Moderation Model

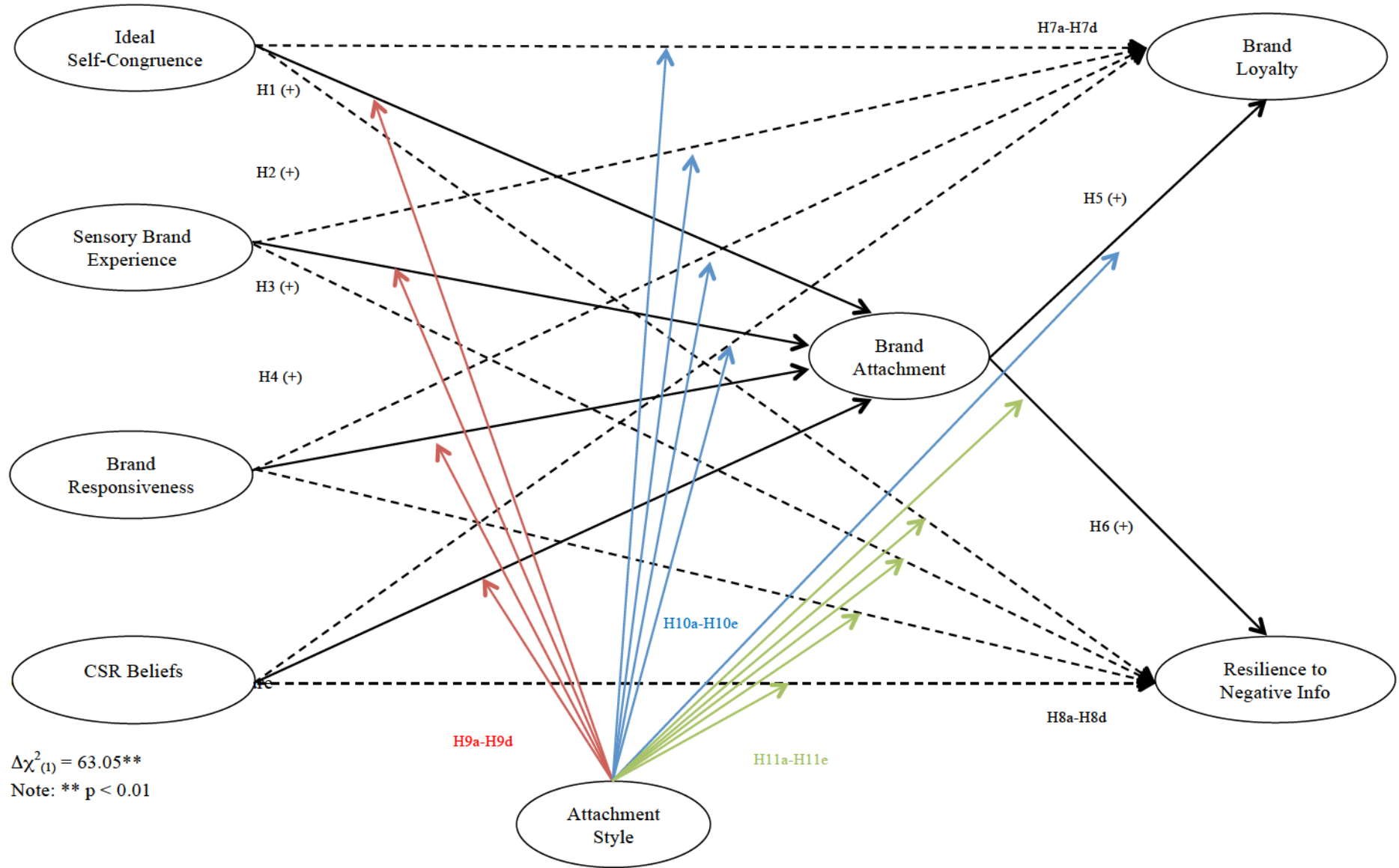


Table 7.30 displays the fit statistics of the two models for secure and insecure group.

Table 7.30 Overall Model Fit Statistics

	N	χ^2	df	GFI	NFI	CFI	RMSEA	SRMR
Model I: Insecure	132	291.86	210	0.85	0.78	0.93	0.06	0.08
Model II: Secure	300	354.91	210	0.91	0.90	0.95	0.05	0.05

Note: Df: Degrees of freedom; RMSEA: Root Mean Square Error of Approximation; SRMR: Standardised Root Mean Residual; GFI: Goodness of Fit Index; NFI: Normed Fit Index; CFI: Comparative Fit Index.

Table 7.30 depicts that both of the groups produced good overall model fit statistics. However, it should be noted that the secure group model fit was better than the insecure group. In the insecure group, the GFI score and the NFI score were below the threshold (0.90). Table 7.31 displays the result of the moderation model.

Table 7.31 Result of Moderation Model

Relationships		Model I: Insecure		Model II: Secure	
		SPC	t-value	SPC	t-value
H _{9a}	Ideal Self-Congruence → BA	0.31	2.96**	0.19	2.77**
H _{9b}	Sensory Brand Experience → BA	-0.06	-0.48	0.15	2.09*
H _{9c}	Brand Responsiveness → BA	0.36	2.89**	0.45	5.37**
H _{9d}	CSR Beliefs → BA	0.07	0.74	0.07	1.18
H _{10a}	Ideal Self-Congruence → BL	0.01	0.07	-0.13	-1.50
H _{10b}	Sensory Brand Experience → BL	0.24	1.55	0.19	2.12*
H _{10c}	Brand Responsiveness → BL	-0.06	-0.46	-0.05	-0.44
H _{10d}	CSR Beliefs → BL	-0.01	-0.05	0.16	2.16*
H _{10e}	Brand Attachment → BL	-0.04	-0.35	0.40	4.16**
H _{11a}	Ideal Self-Congruence → RNI	0.05	0.40	-0.14	-1.75
H _{11b}	Sensory Brand Experience → RNI	0.08	0.51	-0.01	-0.08
H _{11c}	Brand Responsiveness → RNI	-0.13	-0.84	0.24	2.32*
H _{11d}	CSR Beliefs → RNI	0.17	1.34	0.21	3.06**
H _{11e}	Brand Attachment → RNI	0.40	2.74**	0.27	3.02**
Variance explained (R ²)					
Brand Attachment		0.27		0.46	
Brand Loyalty		0.05		0.22	
Resilience to Negative Information		0.20		0.24	

Note: SPC: Standardised Path Coefficient; BA: Brand Attachment; BL: Brand Loyalty; CSR: Corporate Social Responsibility; RNI: Resilience to Negative Information; * $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$.

The results show that model II (the secure group) was better in explaining the variance of brand attachment and brand loyalty. There was a 19% gap between the two models in explaining the variance of brand attachment. As much as 46% of the variance in brand

attachment can be explained by the four constructs in model II (the secure group). In contrast, only 27% of the variance in brand attachment can be explained by the four constructs in model I (the insecure group). In accordance with that, there was a 17% gap between the two models in explaining the variance of brand loyalty. As much as 22% of the variance in brand loyalty can be explained by the five constructs in model II (the secure group). In contrast, only 5% of the variance in brand loyalty can be explained by the five constructs in model I (the insecure group). In terms of resilience to negative information, there was only a slight decrease (4%) of the variance that can be explained by the five constructs.

Hypotheses H9a through H9d suggest that attachment style moderates the effect of the independent variables on brand attachment. The results as shown in Table 7.31 indicate that, in the insecure group, the path between sensory brand experience and brand attachment was not significant ($SPC = -0.06$, $t = -0.48$, $p > .05$). In the secure group, the path between sensory brand experience and brand attachment was significant ($SPC = 0.15$, $t = 2.09$, $p < .05$). The results also show that the path of brand responsiveness with brand attachment was lower in the insecure group compared to the secure group. Although the path coefficient scores of the link between CSR beliefs and brand attachment in the two groups were the same, the critical ratio score of the insecure group was lower. These results show that attachment style moderates the relationships between sensory brand experience, brand responsiveness and CSR beliefs with brand attachment. The results show that the link between ideal self-congruence and brand attachment was not moderated by attachment style.

Hypotheses H10a through H10e suggest that attachment style moderates the effect of the independent variables on brand loyalty. The results as shown in Table 7.31 indicate that, in the insecure group, the paths between the independent variables and brand loyalty were not significant. In the secure group, the paths between sensory brand experience ($SPC = 0.19$, $t = 2.12$, $p < .05$), CSR beliefs ($SPC = 0.16$, $t = 2.16$, $p < .05$), brand attachment ($SPC = 0.40$, $t = 4.16$, $p < .01$) and brand loyalty were significant. These results show that attachment style moderates the relationships between sensory brand experience, CSR beliefs, and brand attachment with brand loyalty. The results show that the links between ideal self-congruence and brand responsiveness with brand loyalty were not moderated by attachment style.

Hypotheses H11a through H11e suggest that attachment style moderates the effect of the independent variables on resilience to negative information. The results as shown in Table

7.31 indicate that, in the insecure group, the paths between brand responsiveness (SPC = -0.13, $t = -0.84$, $p > .05$) and CSR beliefs (SPC = 0.17, $t = 1.34$, $p > .05$) with resilience to negative information were not significant. In the secure group, the paths between brand responsiveness (SPC = 0.24, $t = 2.32$, $p < .05$) and CSR beliefs (SPC = 0.21, $t = 3.06$, $p < .01$) with brand attachment were significant. These results show that attachment style moderates the relationships between brand responsiveness and CSR beliefs with brand attachment. The results show that the path coefficient score of the link between brand attachment and resilience to negative information was higher in the insecure group.

Table 7.32 displays the summary of the results of the hypotheses testing.

Table 7.32 Summary of the Results of the Hypotheses Testing

	Relationships	Result
H ₁	Ideal Self-Congruence → BA	Supported
H ₂	Sensory Brand Experience → BA	Supported
H ₃	Brand Responsiveness → BA	Supported
H ₄	CSR Beliefs → BA	Supported
H ₅	Brand Attachment → BL	Supported
H ₆	Brand Attachment → RNI	Supported
H _{7a}	Ideal Self-Congruence → BL	Not supported
H _{7b}	Sensory Brand Experience → BL	Supported
H _{7c}	Brand Responsiveness → BL	Not supported
H _{7d}	CSR Beliefs → BL	Supported
H _{8a}	Ideal Self-Congruence → RNI	Not supported
H _{8b}	Sensory Brand Experience → RNI	Not supported
H _{8c}	Brand Responsiveness → RNI	Supported
H _{8d}	CSR Beliefs → RNI	Supported
Moderation Analysis		
H _{9a}	Ideal Self-Congruence → BA	Not supported
H _{9b}	Sensory Brand Experience → BA	Supported
H _{9c}	Brand Responsiveness → BA	Not supported
H _{9d}	CSR Beliefs → BA	Not supported
H _{10a}	Ideal Self-Congruence → BL	Not supported
H _{10b}	Sensory Brand Experience → BL	Supported
H _{10c}	Brand Responsiveness → BL	Not supported
H _{10d}	CSR Beliefs → BL	Supported
H _{10e}	Brand Attachment → BL	Supported

Table 7.32 Summary of the Results of the Hypotheses Testing (Continued)

	Relationships	Result
H _{11a}	Ideal Self-Congruence → RNI	Not supported
H _{11b}	Sensory Brand Experience → RNI	Not supported
H _{11c}	Brand Responsiveness → RNI	Supported
H _{11d}	CSR Beliefs → RNI	Supported
H _{11e}	Brand Attachment → RNI	Not supported

7.7 Chapter Summary

This chapter has presented the findings of the survey. It started by presenting the process of the data collection and followed by descriptive analysis of the respondents' profile (e.g. gender, age). Then the chapter moved into testing the validity and reliability of the scale using CFA and EFA. Based on the revised measurement model, seven constructs appeared to be valid and reliable.

Following the measurement model, two structural models were built to test all of the research hypotheses. In the structural model, there were four independent variables (ideal self-congruence, sensory brand experience, brand responsiveness and CSR beliefs), one mediating variable (brand attachment), and two dependent variables (brand loyalty and resilience to negative information). The first structural model accounted for full mediation model, where brand attachment was proposed to fully mediate the relationships between the independent variables and the dependent variables. The second structural model accounted for partial mediation model. In the partial mediation model, the direct paths between the independent variables and the dependent variables were created.

After testing all of the hypotheses in both of the structural models, in order to achieve rigour, the chapter continued to present the test of differences based on gender and age group. Then the analysis moved into testing the moderation effect of attachment style - a multidimensional scale, consisting of anxiety and avoidance. It has been proposed that attachment style moderates the relationships between five variables (ideal self-congruence, sensory brand experience, brand responsiveness, CSR beliefs and brand attachment) with brand loyalty. Before testing the moderation effect, a measurement model was built in order to make sure the validity and reliability of the attachment style scale. After achieving validity and reliability of the scale, the two dimensions were split into high and low category based on a median split. Then, the respondents were split into two groups. The first group was called

insecure group contained respondents with high anxiety and high avoidance, whereas the rest fell into the second group, which was called the secure group.

This chapter only provided the results of the analysis, starting from: demographic profile of the respondents, validity and reliability of the scale, the overall fit statistics of the models, the structural analyses of both full and partial mediation model, and the moderation effect. The summary discussion on the findings can be found in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 8

DISCUSSION

8.1 Introduction

The findings of the survey have been presented in the previous chapter (Chapter 7). This chapter starts with the general discussion of the study. A short background together with the aim and objectives of the study will be presented. The discussions on the findings of the survey will be presented collectively within the fourth objective of the study, which is testing the hypotheses proposed in the research model.

8.2 General Discussion

It has been stated in the introduction (Chapter 1) that the aim of this study is to investigate the antecedents and consequences of brand attachment. Firms' senior management considers branding to be a top priority as it is one of the most valuable intangible assets that firms have (Keller & Lehmann, 2006). According to these authors, brand has several important purposes, such as: (1) providing markers for the offerings of a firm, (2) simplifying choice, promising a quality level, reducing risk, and engendering trust for consumers, (3) reflects the complete experience that consumers have with the product, (4) determines the effectiveness of marketing efforts, and (5) acts as an asset in the financial sense.

CEOs from various firms and industries herald the importance of learning ways to strengthen bond with consumers (IBM, 2010). Creating and maintaining the bond between the firm and its consumers (brand attachment), may well be part of the solution to a growing concern regarding observed reducing levels of brand loyalty. In the marketing literature, brand attachment refers to the cognitive and affective bonding between consumers and brands (Park *et al.*, 2006, 2010). Brand attachment and brand loyalty have been considered as two distinct constructs. Fournier (1998) notes that loyalty is missing the affective components existing in attachment. Based on the findings from the IBM survey, there is a need to have a clearer understanding of the components of brand attachment and how best to nurture this emotional and cognitive bonding between consumers and their preferred brands.

In an extensive global survey organised by Ernst & Young (2011), consumers are found to exhibit lower brand loyalty, which escalates the challenges for businesses to search for new ways to hook their customers. Previous research (e.g. Anderson & Srinivasan, 2003) has established the link between satisfaction and loyalty. Satisfaction refers to the consumer's sense that consumption fulfils some need, desire, goal, or so forth and that this fulfilment is pleasurable (Oliver, 1999). However, satisfaction has been considered as lacking in consistency to demonstrate the link to loyalty (Reichheld, 2003). Reichheld (1996) note the danger known as 'the satisfaction trap' – satisfaction alone does not yield the information firms need to have about delivering value to consumers. These authors remind that the problem lies on generating satisfaction score independent to loyalty.

According to Chandrashekar *et al.* (2007), researchers should focus on the value of monitoring consumers' relationship quality (e.g. attachment) since it has a profound impact on favourable consumer behaviours. This argument is supported by Reibstein *et al.*, (2009), which advocate that connecting customers to firms should be the focus of the field of marketing. Park and MacInnis (2006) propose that attachment encompasses various constructs (e.g. attitude) in explaining higher level of consumers' behaviours, which reflect investment of resources. Park *et al.* (2010), in their quest for creating a scale to measure brand attachment, display that brand attachment is better in explaining consumers' difficult behaviours (e.g. promoting and defending the brand) than brand attitude. Batra *et al.* (2012) indicate attachment as one of the dimensions of brand love. Thus, the focus of managers should be on building ties of affection with their consumers (Vlachos & Vrechopoulos, 2012).

Companies are trying to create strong bonding between consumers and brands since it will lead to positive outcomes, such as positive word-of-mouth, commitment, loyalty and willingness to pay a price premium (e.g. Orth *et al.*, 2010, Vlachos *et al.*, 2010; Kim *et al.*, 2005). For instance, Fedorikhin *et al.* (2008) show that it is more likely that a brand extension will be successful if it is being supported by strong attachment towards the brand. Recent research (Vlachos & Vrechopoulos, 2012) explains that building emotionally-laden relationships with consumers positively influences re-patronage intentions.

Grisaffe and Nguyen (2011) note that firms may harvest financial benefits when enduring emotional attachment to brand is developed and rewards from emotionally bonded repurchases are less expose to situations that induce switching. In order to achieve successful

marketing relationships, firms should understand on how to create or intensify attachments (Thomson, 2006). As Fournier (1998) states, the base of strong brand relationships is feelings related to attachment (Fournier, 1998). Recent research reveals that strong attachment towards a brand can act as a driver of brand equity (Park *et al.*, 2010) and act as a buffer to firm's unethical behaviours (Schmalz & Orth, 2012). Thus, Park *et al.* (2010, p.14) urge researchers to examine "how marketers can enhance brand attachment".

Although brand attachment has received scholarly attention recently, it is still in its early stage and needs further research. Several research on brand attachment used measurement adapted from psychology literature (e.g. Kim *et al.*, 2005; Thomson, 2006). Two researches put efforts on defining brand attachment and constructing own scale for measuring brand attachment (Park *et al.*, 2010; Thomson *et al.*, 2005). Thomson *et al.* (2005) use emotions (affection, passion and connection) in their emotional brand attachment scale. Meanwhile, Park *et al.*'s (2010) conception of brand attachment adds cognitions apart from emotions, which reflect brand-self connection and brand prominence. Some effort has been made in order to try to investigate the antecedents of brand attachment (Malär *et al.*, 2011; Orth *et al.*, 2010; Vlachos *et al.*, 2010). However, they use Thomson *et al.*'s (2005) measurement of brand attachment, which only captures affective bonding. A comprehensive study on the antecedents of brand attachment that fosters brand-self connection and brand prominence is still needed (Park *et al.*, 2010). Hence, this study proposes a comprehensive model in the formation of brand attachment using the conceptualisation of brand attachment, which includes emotions and cognitions. In order to achieve this aim, the following objectives are developed:

1. To review the literature on consumer-brand relationships, in particular brand attachment.
2. To develop a research model that explains factors influencing the formation and the outcomes of stronger brand attachment.
3. To validate the research model.
4. To test the hypotheses proposed in the research model.

8.3 Objective 1: Review of the Literature

Reviewing the literature on brand attachment goes beyond the literature on consumer-brand relationships. Not only has the marketing literature been reviewed, but also psychology literature. The reasons for incorporating psychology literature are: (1) the root of attachment

itself comes from psychology in the context of relationships between infants with their caregivers, (2) the meaning of the word attachment, according to The Oxford English Dictionary, consolidate feelings (e.g. affection, sympathy) which is also the domain of psychology, and (3) attachment has been studied extensively in psychology.

In chapter 2, the review starts from the attachment theory. According to the attachment theory (Bowlby, 1969), attachment is a system of behaviour that guides the emotional connection of an individual with others. The goal of attachment system is fulfilling the individual's actual or perceived protection and security (Shaver & Mikulincer, 2005). Although attachment theory started from the relationship between an infant and his/her caregiver, attachment has been found to be existed in other relationships, such as romantic love (Hazan & Shaver, 1987), and friendships (Trinke & Bartholomew, 1997). Attachment also exists beyond interpersonal relationships toward brands (Fournier, 1998).

The review continues to the realm of brand attachment. Fournier (1998) introduces the notion that consumer's attachment toward a brand is based on strong affective concept called brand relationship quality (BRQ). The quest on how to conceptualise and measure consumers' emotional attachment continued up until Thomson *et al.* (2005), who offer a conceptualisation of emotional bonding through three dimensions (affection, passion, and connection). Following their study, Park *et al.* (2006) suggest that brand attachment is a concept beyond emotional bonding, including cognitive bonding – brand-self connection – in the conceptualisation.

After reviewing the literature on the development of conceptualisation and measurement of brand attachment, the differences and similarities of brand attachment with other constructs are discussed. Brand attachment is closely related to other constructs, such as: brand attitude, involvement, satisfaction, and loyalty. However, they are also distinct. In their paper, Thomson *et al.* (2005) argue that when consumers are emotionally attached to a brand, it is also very likely that they have a favourable attitude toward the brand, they are likely to be satisfied with the brand, and they have a certain degree of involvement with the brand.

The above arguments provide support that brand attachment is closely related to these constructs. Nevertheless, attachment is conceptually distinct from these constructs. For instance, brand attitude grasp consumer's mind, while brand attachment grasp both the

consumer's mind and heart. Moreover, several others constructs, such as: brand relationship quality (BRQ), consumer-brand identification (CBI), and brand love have been deemed similar to brand attachment. In summary, brand attachment is different from those constructs. For instance, brand attachment proposes similar outcomes with BRQ, but brand attachment only reflects the strength dimension of self-connection (Park *et al.*, 2010). Stokburger-Sauer *et al.* (2012) regard that the construct of CBI is narrower compared to brand attachment. Other than that, brand attachment and brand loyalty are different in the sense that the affective commitment (Fournier, 1998). Details on the differences of brand attachment with other constructs can be seen in Chapter 2.

Measurement of brand attachment is evolving. Previously, several researchers of brand attachment used measurements adapted from the psychology literature. For instance, Thomson (2006) used separation anxiety to measure attachment strength, whereas Kim *et al.* (2005) used emotional distress and separation anxiety. Later research put efforts on defining brand attachment and constructing new scales for measuring brand attachment (e.g. Thomson *et al.*, 2005). Thomson *et al.* (2005) use emotions (affection, passion and connection) in their emotional brand attachment scale. Fedorikhin *et al.* (2008) introduce the notion of brand-self connection to measure attachment strength, adding cognitions apart from emotions. Recent research indicates that measuring brand attachment with only brand-self connection is not enough and adds the notion of brand prominence (Park *et al.*, 2010).

Positive outcomes of having a strong brand attachment have also been documented in the marketing literature. According to Park and MacInnis (2006), brand attachment is capable to explain higher level of consumer's behaviours. Besides, several studies (e.g. Orth *et al.*, 2010; Vlachos *et al.*, 2010) have shown that brand attachment leads to commitment, loyalty, positive word-of-mouth, willingness to pay price premium, minimise switching and maximise defensive act against negative information. Judging from these findings, it provides support that attachment is a prominent construct to investigate. Park *et al.* (2010) also argue that brand attachment is a critical driver of brand equity – which has been regarded as a key factor in building strong brands (e.g. Keller, 2008). Keller and Lehmann (2006) note that branding and brand management are important management priority across all types of organisations.

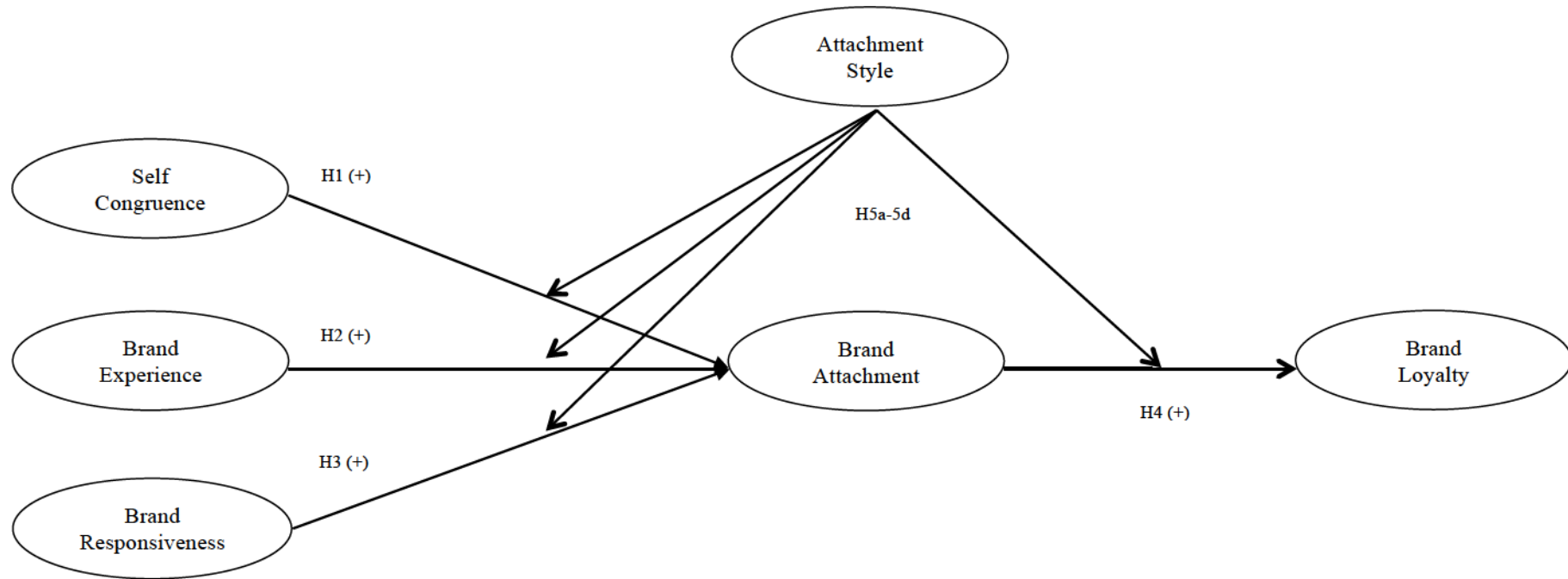
Limited studies have started to investigate the antecedents of brand attachment. For example, Orth *et al.* (2010), Vlachos *et al.* (2010), Grisaffe and Nguyen (2011), Kim *et al.* (2005),

Thomson (2006), and Malär *et al.* (2011) have tried to propose factors that will positively influence brand attachment. But, these studies measure only emotional brand attachment. As has been discussed above, the conceptualisation of brand attachment has progressed and now includes emotional and cognitive bonding. No study has proposed the antecedents of brand attachment, which accommodate not only emotional bonding but also cognitive bonding. This study answers Park *et al.* (2010) calling for further research to find factors that can create stronger brand attachment that covers brand-self connection and brand prominence.

8.4 Objective 2: Developing a Research Model

The literature review continues to search for the drivers of brand attachment (see Chapter 3). Based on two psychological theories (self-concept and attachment theory), three factors emerge as the antecedents of brand attachment. Figure 8.1 below displays the research model of this study.

Figure 8.1 The Research Model



According to the self-concept theory, a person has three motives related to their 'self', which are: self-consistency, self-enhancement, and social-consistency (Sirgy, 1982). Based on this theory, the higher the fit between the self and the brand's image in relation to these three motives, the higher the willingness to support the brand (Aaker, 1999). Therefore, self-congruence is proposed as one of the drivers of brand attachment. According to attachment theory, familiarity and responsiveness are the two factors that guide a person in selecting an attachment figure (Hazan & Shaver, 1994). It has been suggested that the collection of direct and indirect experiences form familiarity (Alba & Hutchinson, 1987). In accordance, this study put forward brand experience and brand responsiveness as the antecedents of brand attachment.

One of the constructs that has been discussed as being different from brand attachment is attachment style. Different individuals have different attachment styles, resulting in different characteristics that guide their attachment process (Collins & Read, 1990). Attachment style has been defined as a systematic pattern of expectations, emotions and behaviours within relationships, from a particular history of attachment experiences (Shaver & Mikulincer, 2005). Research in the interpersonal domain suggests that attachment style is based upon two dimensions: *anxiety* and *avoidance* (Brennan *et al.*, 1998). These two dimensions are related with an individual's view of self (anxiety) and an individual's view of others (avoidance), whether it is positive or negative. The anxiety dimension refers to the extent to which an individual "worries that relationship partners may not be available in times of need, has an excessive need for approval, and fears rejection and abandonment"; whereas, the avoidance dimension refers to the extent to which an individual "has an excessive need for self-reliance, fears depending on others, distrusts relationship partners' goodwill, and strives for emotional and cognitive distance from partners" (Mende *et al.*, 2013, p.126). Following the argument of Mende and Bolton (2011) that attachment style and attachment strength as two distinct phenomena, we put forward attachment style as the moderator between the relationships.

8.5 Objective 3: Validating the Research Model

In order to validate the research model, a two-stage process was designed: qualitative and quantitative. A qualitative (i.e. exploratory) study using semi-structured interviews and projective techniques was designed (Chapter 5). These two instruments were chosen to account for greater depth of insight (Malhotra, 2010) and social distortions (Rook, 2006).

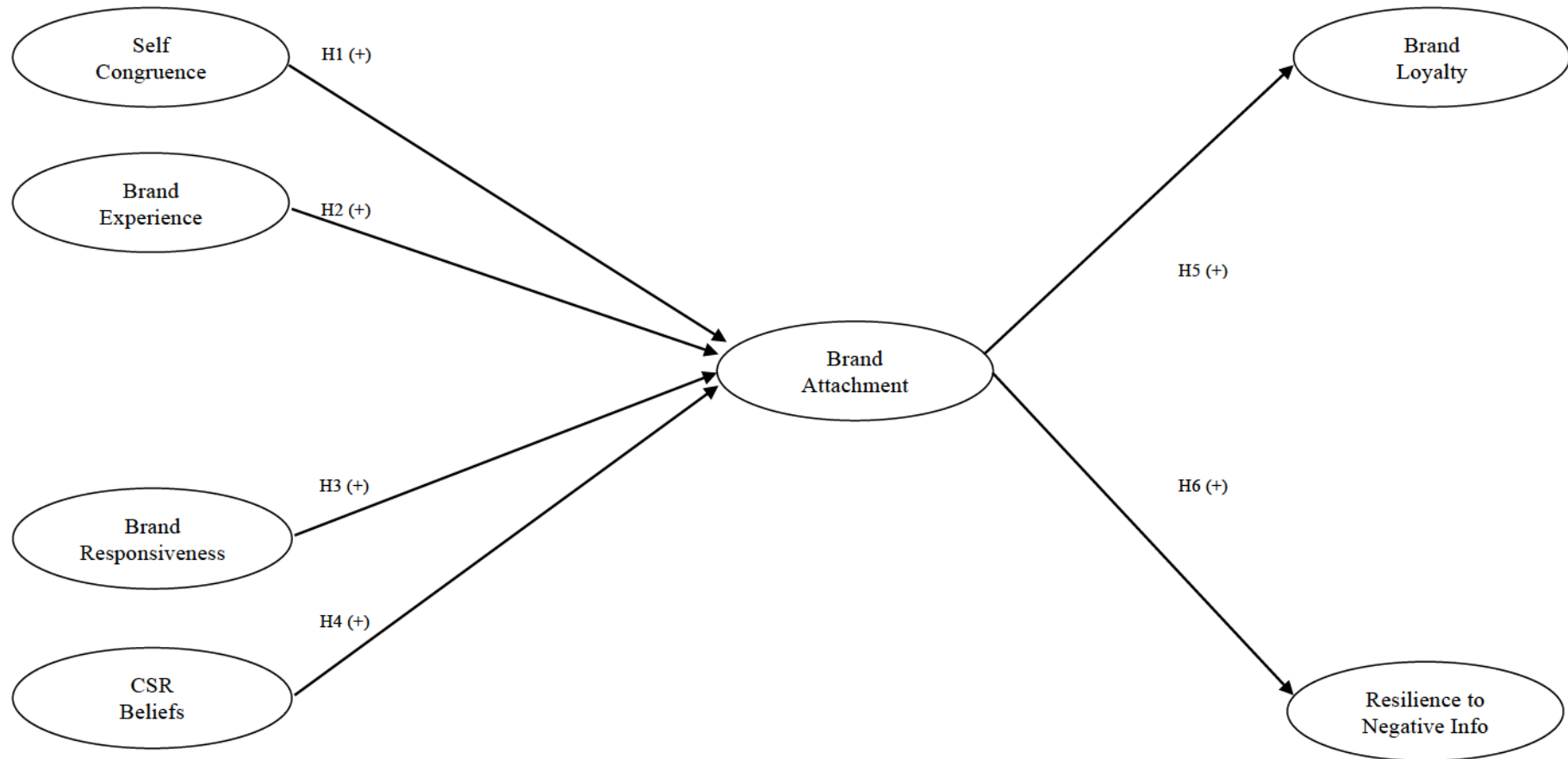
Afterwards, a quantitative study using Structural Equation Modelling was designed (Chapter 6) to test the research hypotheses.

The objective of the exploratory study was to gather insights on the development of consumer's attachment toward brands and consumers' behaviours as a result of that attachment. The research model (Figure 8.1) is derived from the literature review. In order to make it more comprehensive and rigorous, the findings of the exploratory study were used to refine the research model. The qualitative research method that was used in this study is the semi-structured interviews together with a projective techniques using sentence completion.

According to Malhotra (2010), interviews are able to uncover greater depth of insight compare to focus group. Malhotra also notes that interviews attribute the responses directly to the participant, whereas it is generally difficult to determine which participant made a particular response in focus groups. In addition, semi-structured interviews were chosen over focus group discussion in this research because of social distortions. Social distortions always occur in consumer research, and focus groups tend to stimulate self-presentational face issues which motivate respondents to consciously modify responses in order to impress, intimidate, or please others (Rook, 2006).

In conjunction with the semi-structured interviews, sentence completion (a technique in projective techniques) was used. Malhotra (2010) notes the views that regard qualitative techniques as mutually exclusive should be reconsidered on the account that using a combination of various qualitative techniques can yield valuable information. Further, the variation in theoretical and topical curiosity in brand meanings and relationships, and also in consumers' emotions, desires and motivations has increased the motivation of using projective methods (Rook, 2006). Using projective techniques can help a researcher to overcome awareness barriers, irrationality barriers, inadmissibility barriers, self-incrimination barriers, and politeness barriers (Oppenheim, 1992). In addition, Malhotra (2010) indicates that if the objective of the exploratory research is to gain initial insights and understanding, then using projective techniques is appropriate. In total, 12 respondents were recruited for the semi-structured interviews. Based on the results of the exploratory study, the research model was revised (Figure 8.2).

Figure 8.2 The Research Model (Revised)



As can be seen in the revised research model in Figure 8.2, CSR beliefs have been added as one of the antecedents of brand attachment. CSR activities for a firm are not only for the sake of “doing good” and “the right thing to do”, but also lead to “doing better”, since consumers are particularly susceptible to these activities (Bhattacharya & Sen, 2004). Holt *et al.* (2004) reveal that consumers all over the world associate global brands with three characteristics: (1) quality signal, (2) global myth (global brands as symbols of cultural ideals) and (3) social responsibility. Brown and Dacin (1997) indicate that CSR associations play a role in influencing consumers’ product evaluations. According to Holt *et al.* (2004), social responsibility influences brand preferences. They indicate that consumers are convinced that global brands have the responsibilities to endeavour social issues. Stronger CSR beliefs lead to greater identification with the brand (Du *et al.*, 2007) and positively influence consumer-retailer love (Vlachos & Vrechopoulos, 2012). Additionally, Bhattacharya and Sen (2004) argue that the outcome of CSR activities is a sense of attachment toward the brand.

In conjunction, resilience to negative information is put forward as the other outcome next to loyalty. Bhattacharya and Sen (2003) propose that the more strongly consumers identify themselves with a brand; the higher is their resilience to negative information towards the brand. When consumers identify themselves with a brand, they consider the brand to be similar to themselves, supporting being forgiving towards the brand; just as they are forgiving towards themselves. Park *et al.* (2010) indicate that stronger attachment with the brand leads to consumers performing difficult behaviours (e.g. defending the brand). When others speak poorly about the brand, they consider that other people speak poorly about them, which increases their self-defence mechanism. Strong attachment dissipates consumers’ judgment towards the brand’s unethical behaviours (Schmalz & Orth, 2012).

The rest of the constructs (e.g. experience and responsiveness) also appear on the exploratory study, except for attachment style. Hence, the moderating effect of attachment style is tested separately. Figure 8.3 below depicts the moderation model.

Figure 8.3 The Moderation Model

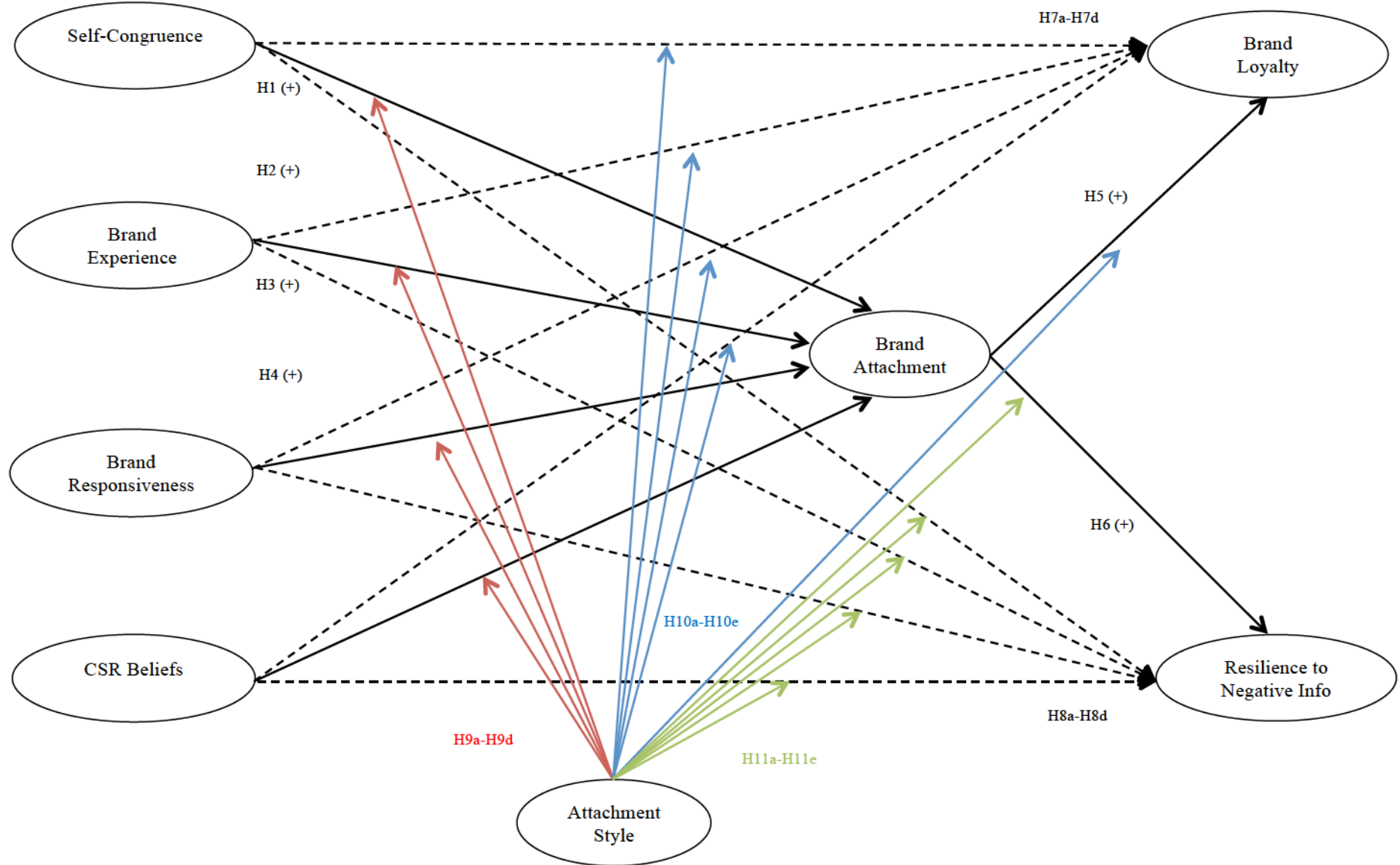


Figure 8.3 displays the relationships between brand attachment with its antecedents and consequences. Attachment style is hypothesised to moderate the relationships of four variables (self-congruence, brand experience, brand responsiveness and CSR beliefs) on brand attachment as well as the relationships between brand attachment with brand loyalty and resilience to negative information. As it has been discussed above, attachment style reflects two dimensions: anxiety and avoidance. If a consumer has high anxiety and avoidance, that consumer is considered to possess insecurity. Secure individuals have the ability to reduce distress and remove obstacles through turning to others, whereas insecure individuals are less-able to confront the distress-eliciting situation exhibiting fewer resources to explore the environment, have fun with others or attend to others' needs (Mikulincer *et al.*, 2003). When failure of proximity seeking to relieve distress occurs, insecure individuals carry-out secondary strategies: hyperactivation and deactivation (Shaver & Mikulincer, 2005; Mikulincer *et al.*, 2003).

Hyperactivation strategy has been defined as “intense efforts to attain proximity to attachment figures and ensure their attention and support”, whereas deactivation strategy has been defined as “the inhibition of proximity-seeking inclinations and actions, and the suppression or discounting of any threat that may activate the attachment system” (Shaver & Mikulincer, 2005, p. 26). Insecure attachment has been argued as the root to various dysfunctional behaviours, which may result in relationship dissatisfaction and dissolution (Hazan & Shaver, 1994). It may be because insecure attachment mobilises the activation of hyperactivating and deactivating strategies. Hyperactivating and deactivating strategies hold the attachment system chronically activated and in check, causing insecure people constantly on the alert for threats, separations, and betrayals with serious consequences for cognitive and emotional openness (Mikulincer *et al.*, 2003). Hence, when insecurity occurs, it is proposed that the relationships of the four variables on brand attachment as well as the relationships between brand attachment and its consequences will be moderated.

8.6 Objective 4: Testing the Hypotheses Proposed in the Research Model

A survey-based approach using a questionnaire (see Chapter 7) was created to collect the data in order to test all of the research hypotheses. In total, 432 questionnaires were used for the analysis. Based on the analysis, 62% of the respondents were female, 36% were single and 48% were married. 21% of the respondents were in the 16-24 age-group, 16% were in the 25-34 age-group, 19% were in the 35-44 age-group, 18% were in the 45-45 age-group, 14% were

in the 55-64 age-group and the rest was in the 65 and above age-group. 32% of the respondents obtained an undergraduate degree, 28% obtained a master's degree, 17% obtained A-level or equivalent, 10% obtained a doctoral degree and 6% obtained GCSE or equivalent. Regarding the respondents' income, 21% were in the £20,000-£29,000, 17% were in the £10,000-£19,000 and 16% were in the £40,000-£59,999 income bracket.

As has been discussed in Chapter 6, the research population of this study is consumers within the UK. According to the 2011 Census in the UK (ONS, 2013b), females accounted for 51% of the total population, 47% were married and 35% were single, whereas the mean age was 39.4 (age 16-29: 19% and age 30-64: 46%). In 2011/2012, the median household income was £23,200 (ONS, 2013a). The Census (ONS, 2013b) displays that most of the population (27%) have obtained level 4 qualifications and above (e.g. bachelor degree). Based on these, the respondents of this study were representative of the research population, who are consumers within the UK. For more rigour, these key statistics were compared to the statistics of Oxfordshire (South East region) since the data collection was done in this area. According to the 2011 Census (ONS, 2013b), in South East region, female accounted for 51%, 32% were single and 49% were married, whereas 17% were in the age group of 16-29 and 46% were in the age group of 30-64. Again, these results show that the respondents of this study were quite representative.

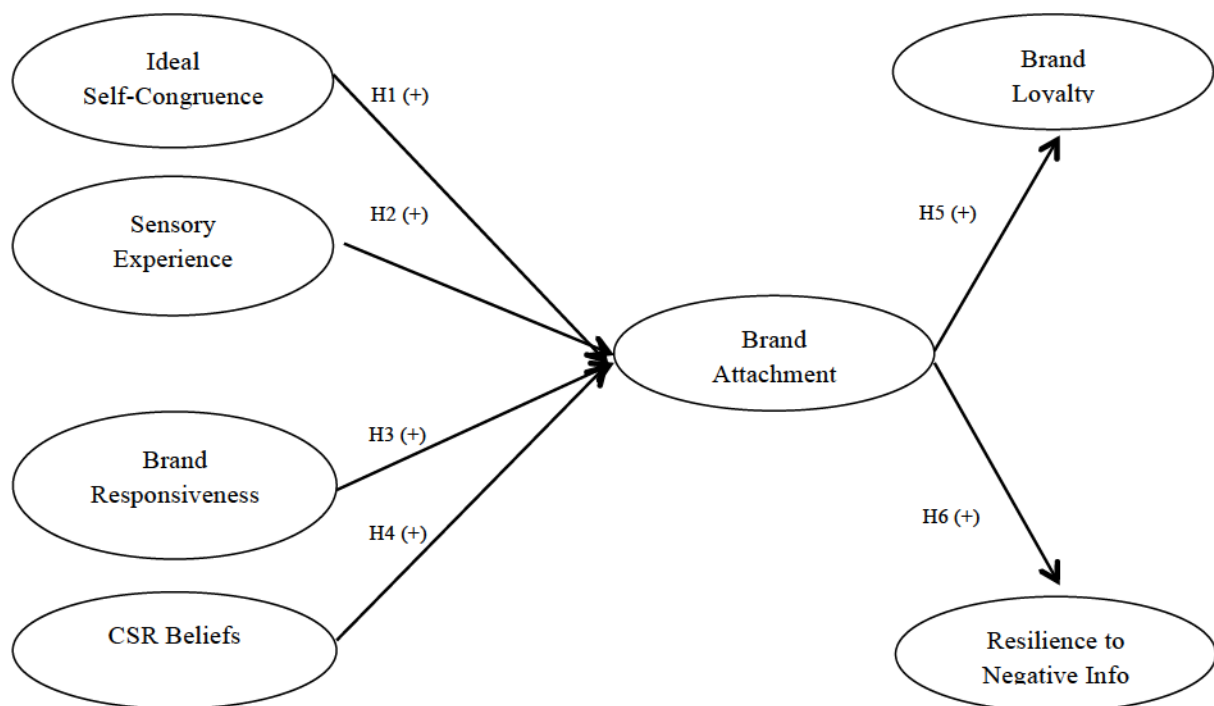
Before conducting any multivariate analysis, the normality of the data was checked. After ensuring normality of the data, the validity and reliability of each scale was assessed. Following Binz *et al.* (2013), if the result of the CFA does not achieve an acceptable fit, EFA will be conducted to examine the dimensionality of the constructs. Afterwards, CFA will be applied to validate the operationalisation of the constructs from the result of EFA. This is because the factor loading of brand experience is poor. The result of a poor brand experience scale is similar to Iglesias *et al.*'s (2011) study. According to the literature (Hair *et al.*, 2010; Bollen, 1989), one dimension should at least contain three operationalisation items. Based on the results, brand experience loaded into two factors. However, further analysis reduced the scale into one dimension – sensory brand experience.

Similar to the brand experience scale, the brand responsiveness scale was changed from multidimensional to the unidimensional scale. This was as a result of the CFA-EFA-CFA tests. Brand responsiveness, which is supposed to have three dimensions (autonomy,

relatedness, and competence), loaded into a single factor. Moreover, brand attachment, which is supposed to reflect two dimensions (brand-self connection and brand prominence), loaded into a single factor. Although further examination using different respondents are needed, the fact that these scales (brand experience, brand responsiveness and brand attachment) were reduced to a unidimensional scale may be due to several reasons. First, these scales were originally constructed and validated using respondents in the United States (US). There may be several cultural differences (e.g. language) between US respondents and UK respondents. Second, the survey did not ask the respondents to answer based on a list of predetermined brands. For instance, there are several brands that have been considered as experiential brands and others have been considered as non-experiential brands.

In order to test the hypotheses, the moderation effect of attachment style was excluded. This research tested the hypotheses based on two models: full mediation model and partial mediation model. The full mediation model can be seen in figure 8.4 below.

Figure 8.4 The Full Mediation Model



In the full mediation model, four antecedents are proposed to influence brand attachment – self-congruence, brand experience, brand responsiveness and CSR beliefs. Two behaviours (brand loyalty and resilience to negative information) appear as a result of strong bonding

with the brand. Figure 8.4 displays that overall brand attachment is influenced positively by four factors: self-congruence (H1), brand experience (H2), brand responsiveness (H3) and CSR beliefs (H4). The overall brand attachment fully mediates the relationships and lead to two consequences: brand loyalty and resilience to negative information.

Consistent with prior research, the current study regards that brand attachment fully mediates the relationships. For instance, Vlachos *et al.* (2010) put forward consumer-firm emotional attachment to fully mediate the relationships between the antecedents (e.g. shopping enjoyment) and consequences (e.g. word-of-mouth). Another study (Stokburger-Sauer *et al.*, 2012) also put forward consumer-brand identification to fully mediate the relationships between the drivers and the outcomes. In order to examine the mediation role of brand attachment, a partial mediation model has been developed.

The full mediation and partial mediation model were checked and both model obtained a good overall fit statistics. However, results from the χ^2 difference test suggest that the partial mediation model provides the best fit for the data ($\Delta\chi^2_{(8)} = 34.97$; $p < 0.01$). The partial mediation model can be seen in Figure 8.5 below.

Figure 8.5 The Most Valid Model: The Partial Mediation Model

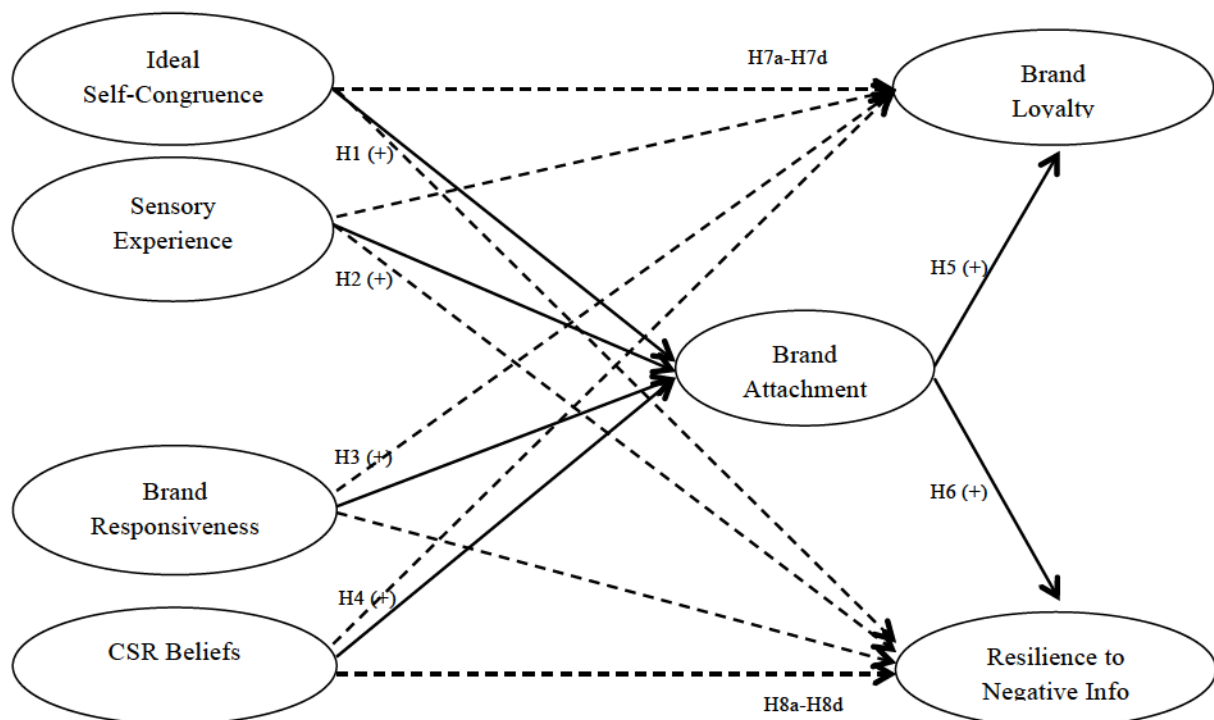


Figure 8.5 displays that the four antecedents which indirectly influence brand loyalty and resilience to negative information through brand attachment (H1-H6), as well as the direct influence of these four antecedents to the two favourable behaviours (H7a-H7d and H8a-H8d). The partial mediation model introduces two set of additional hypotheses. The first set of hypothesis (H7a-7d) indicates that there is a direct relationship between the five antecedents of brand attachment and brand loyalty; whereas the second set of hypothesis (H8a-8d) indicates that there is a direct relationship between the five antecedents of brand attachment and resilience to negative information.

The hypotheses H1-H4 were supported. Ideal self-congruence, sensory brand experience, brand responsiveness, and CSR beliefs were positively correlated with brand attachment that fosters both cognitive and affective bonding. The findings provide a comprehensive conceptual framework for the determinants of brand attachment since the four variables accounted for almost half of the variance of brand attachment. This means that these four antecedents are prominent drivers of stronger brand attachment.

Ideal self-congruence positively influences brand attachment. This finding corroborates Malär *et al.*'s (2011) study that self-congruence positively influences emotional brand attachment. In addition to that, this study finds that self-congruence also an important indicator of cognitive attachment. However, the present study did not examine whether actual self-congruence has a positive effect on brand attachment. Nevertheless, previous research (Ekinici *et al.*, 2008; Nam *et al.*, 2011) has shown that ideal self-congruence is more important compared to actual self-congruence in explaining favourable consumer behaviours (e.g. satisfaction). Consumers use brands for symbolic purposes, such as to enhance their self-image (Ekinici *et al.*, 2013). Research (e.g. Escalas & Bettman, 2003, 2005; Reimann & Aron, 2009; Nam *et al.*, 2011; Reimann *et al.*, 2012) acknowledges that ideal self-congruence is related to consumers' self-expansion motive. Consumers tend to use or purchase brands that are able to help them in enhancing their self-image. Thus, ideal self-congruence has a positive effect on brand attachment that reflects not only emotional bonding but also cognitive bonding.

Brakus *et al.* (2009) argues that brand experience leads to attachment. This study finds that sensory experience positively influences brand attachment, providing an empirical support to Brakus *et al.*'s argument. Although brand experience has been conceptualised to reflect four

dimensions (sensory, affective, intellectual and behavioural), the present study displays the crucial role of sensory experience in building stronger attachment. This offers support to Krishna's (2006, 2012) statement that sensory marketing is growing due to its prominent role. Consumers' perceptions toward brands are being triggered subconsciously through their sensory experiences with the brands (Krishna, 2012).

In a study of human brands, Thomson (2006) finds that autonomy, relatedness and not suppressing competence are indicators of separation anxiety. Although the present study finds support for Thomson's (2006) study, this study suggests that competence should not be ignored. The findings show that competence together with autonomy and relatedness are important drivers of brand attachment. Park *et al.* (2006, 2013) argue that in order for a brand to provide a sense of enabling the consumers' self, a brand should provide a sense of efficacy to its consumers. When a brand provides a sense of enabling its consumers' self, stronger attachment will be achieved (Vlachos *et al.*, 2010). Thus, competence should be considered as one of the important factors, together with autonomy and relatedness, in building attachment.

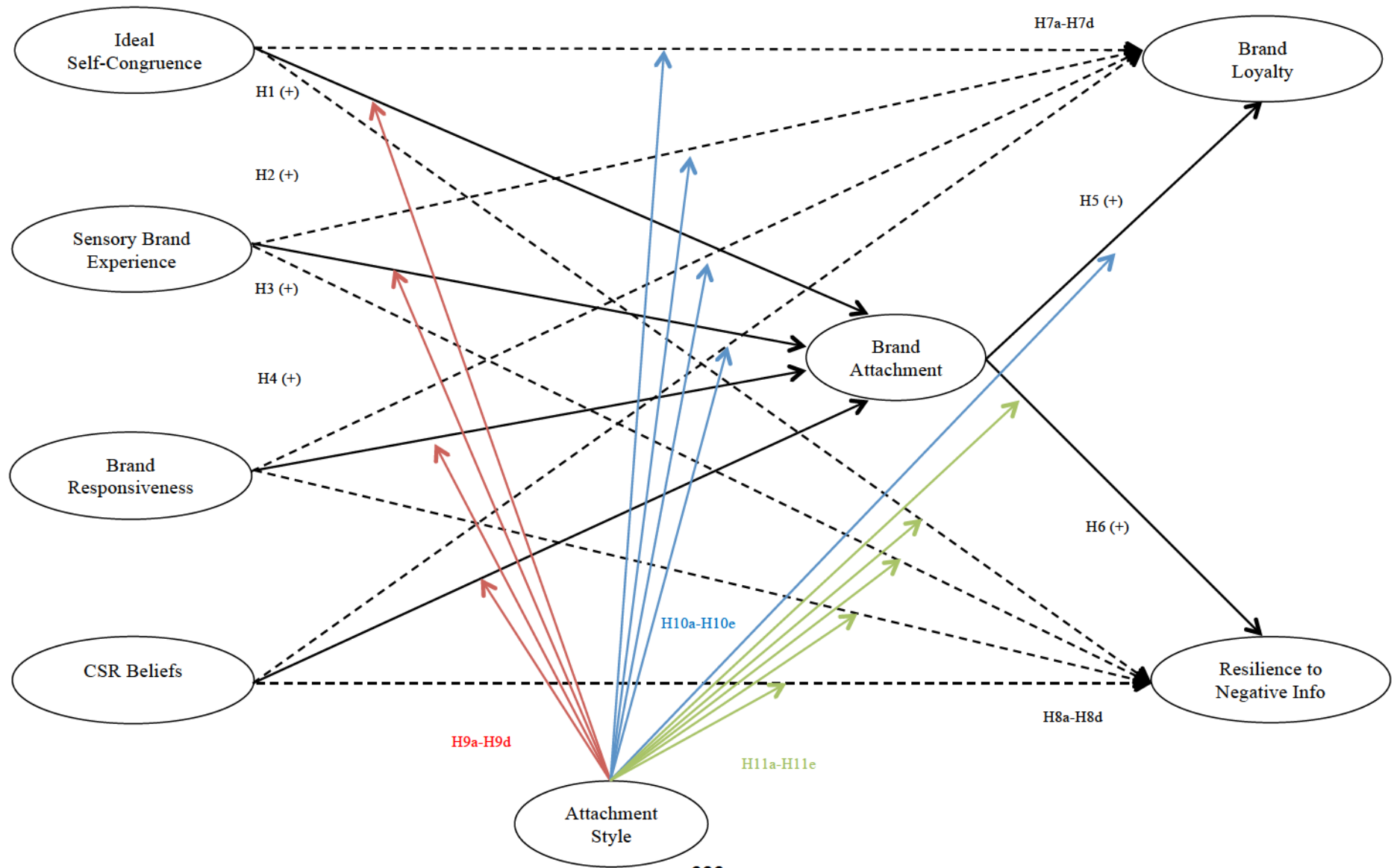
Marketing practices are changing since today's consumers are interested in how a firm performs its social responsibilities (Kotler, 2011). The CSR initiative has been regarded as the forefront of corporate consciousness, since consumers are particularly susceptible to a brand's CSR initiatives (Du *et al.*, 2007; Bhattacharya & Sen, 2004). Holt *et al.* (2004) reveal that consumers all over the world associate global brands with social responsibility. They indicate that consumers are convinced that successful global brands have the responsibilities to endeavour social issues. This study extends Luo and Bhattacharya's (2006) study by showing that CSR influences not only consumers' positive response toward brands but also consumers' tendency to create attachment with the brands. Finally, this study extends support to the link between CSR and brand love (Vlachos & Vrechopoulos, 2012) by showing that CSR beliefs positively influence brand attachment.

H5 and H6 state that brand attachment exerts a positive influence on brand loyalty and resilience to negative information was statistically significant. The results indicate that both brand loyalty and resilience of negative information were positively associated to brand attachment. The findings offer support to various studies that display the link between emotional attachment and loyalty. In conjunction, this study extends those studies by displaying that cognitive bonding is also a driver of loyalty. Bhattacharya and Sen (2003)

argue that consumer-company identification leads to resilience to negative information. The current study offers empirical support through the link between brand attachment and resilience to negative information.

For the mediation effect of brand attachment on brand loyalty (H7a-H7e), the results show that brand attachment partially mediates sensory brand experience and CSR beliefs on brand loyalty. Conversely, brand attachment fully mediates the relationships between ideal self-congruence and brand loyalty as well as the relationships between brand responsiveness and brand loyalty. For the mediation effect of brand attachment on resilience to negative information (H8a-H8e), the results show that brand attachment partially mediates the two variables on resilience to negative information. On the other hand, brand attachment fully mediates the relationships between ideal self-congruence and resilience to negative information as well as the relationships between sensory brand experience and resilience to negative information. Next, the moderation effect was tested. Figure 8.6 shows the moderation model.

Figure 8.6 The Moderation Model



To test the moderation effect, anxiety and avoidance were split into high and low, based on the median score. A value of 1 was given to high anxiety and avoidance, whereas a value of 0 was given to the low. Subsequently, attachment style was categorised into secure and insecure attachment style. When anxiety and avoidance were high, the participants were categorised into insecure attachment style. Conversely, participants were categorised into secure attachment style. Both of the groups produced good overall model fit statistics. However, it should be noted that the secure group model fit was better than the insecure group.

The results show that the secure group model was better in explaining the variance of brand attachment, 46% as compared to 27% in the insecure group model. There was a 19% gap between the two models in explaining the variance of brand attachment. The results also show that the secure group model was better in explaining the variance of brand loyalty, 22% as compared to 5% in the insecure group model. There was a 17% gap between the two models in explaining the variance of brand loyalty. In terms of resilience to negative information, there was only a slight decrease (4%) of the variance that can be explained by the five constructs.

Attachment style moderates the effect of the independent variables on brand attachment has been suggested in hypotheses H9a through H9d. The results indicate that, in the insecure group, the path between sensory brand experience and brand attachment was not supported ($SPC = -0.06$, $t = -0.48$, $p > .05$). In the secure group, the path between sensory brand experience and brand attachment was supported ($SPC = 0.15$, $t = 2.09$, $p < .05$). The results also show that the path of brand responsiveness with brand attachment was lower in the insecure group compared to the secure group. Although the path coefficient scores of the link between CSR beliefs and brand attachment in the two groups were the same, the critical ratio score of the insecure group was lower. These results show that attachment style moderates the relationships between sensory brand experience, brand responsiveness and CSR beliefs with brand attachment.

The results show that the link between ideal self-congruence and brand attachment was not moderated by attachment style. Insecure consumers consider to have invested their resources the most towards a certain brand in a relationship (Thomson *et al.*, 2012). Ideal self-congruence is the fit between consumer's ideal-self and the brand's image or personality (Aaker, 1999), which only reflects consumers' aspirational needs (Malär *et al.*, 2011). If the

brand's personality or image fits the consumer's ideal-self, a bonding between the consumer and the brand will occur. Hence, whether it is a secure or insecure consumer, it does not change this relationship because there is no investment in resources.

In hypotheses H10a through H10e, it has been suggested that attachment style moderates the effect of the independent variables on brand loyalty. The results indicate that, in the insecure group, the paths between the independent variables and brand loyalty were not supported. In the secure group, the paths between sensory brand experience (SPC = 0.19, $t = 2.12$, $p < .05$), CSR beliefs (SPC = 0.16, $t = 2.16$, $p < .05$), brand attachment (SPC = 0.40, $t = 4.16$, $p < .01$) and brand loyalty were supported. These results show that attachment style moderates the relationships between sensory brand experience, CSR beliefs, and brand attachment with brand loyalty. The results show that the links between ideal self-congruence and brand responsiveness with brand loyalty were not moderated by attachment style.

The relationships between ideal self-congruence, brand responsiveness, and brand loyalty were not moderated by attachment style. This might be due to the fact that the relationship between ideal self-congruence and brand loyalty, as well as the relationship between brand responsiveness and brand loyalty, were not significant. Extant research has shown that ideal self-congruence directly leads to loyalty (e.g. Nam *et al.*, 2011; Kressman *et al.*, 2006). The findings of this study show that the link between ideal self-congruence and loyalty has not been supported. This difference might be because previous research did not account for the construct of attachment in their models. Another possible explanation for this is because ideal self-congruence reflects the consumers' affective aspects. Ideal self-congruence is the fit between consumers' ideal-self (who they would like to be in the future) and the brand's personality or image (Aaker, 1999; Sirgy, 1982). Increasing ideal self-congruence evokes consumers' feelings towards the brand, which increases the bonding. However, this does not mean that consumers will automatically become loyal to the brand overnight.

The findings of this study show that the link between brand responsiveness and brand loyalty has not been supported. This is to be expected as the link was not hypothesised and previous studies have not shown any support to this link. Brand responsiveness in this research refers to the ability of the brand to fulfil consumers' sense of autonomy, relatedness and competence. Being more responsive means that the brand provides its consumers these three effects. For instance, by fulfilling consumers' sense of competence, the brand provides the

consumers with a sense of capable-self – which is fundamental for increasing cognitive bonding through the pillar of enabling-the-self (c.f. Park *et al.*, 2006).

Hypotheses H11a through H11e suggest that the effect of the independent variables on resilience to negative information is being moderated by attachment style. The results indicate that, in the insecure group, the paths between brand responsiveness (SPC = -0.13, $t = -0.84$, $p > .05$) and CSR beliefs (SPC = 0.17, $t = 1.34$, $p > .05$) with resilience to negative information were not supported. In the secure group, the paths between brand responsiveness (SPC = 0.24, $t = 2.32$, $p < .05$) and CSR beliefs (SPC = 0.21, $t = 3.06$, $p < .01$) with brand attachment were supported. These results show that attachment style moderates the relationships between brand responsiveness and CSR beliefs with brand attachment. The results show that the path coefficient score of the link between brand attachment and resilience to negative information was higher in the insecure group.

The reason on why the link between ideal self-congruence and resilience to negative information is similar to the previous discussion. Basically it is because there is no investment of resources. Regarding the link between sensory brand experience and resilience to negative information, this might be due to the fact that the link was not significant. Finally, the link between brand attachment and resilience to negative information was not moderated by attachment style. The positive link between brand attachment and resilience to negative information means that the stronger the bonding, the higher the chance that the consumers will forgive and defend the brand. As it has been discussed before, insecure consumers tend to consider investing the most resources towards a particular brand (Thomson *et al.*, 2012). Thus, when the relationship is still ongoing between the consumer and the brand, insecure consumers tend to become more resilient to negative information. This might be a possible explanation for the between brand attachment and resilience to negative information; the link will not be weakened but be strengthen for insecure consumers.

CHAPTER 9

CONCLUSIONS AND REFLECTIONS

9.1 Introduction

This concluding chapter starts with the theoretical contributions. Then, the managerial implications are presented. The chapter also suggests limitations and insights on further studies, before offering concluding reflections about this PhD journey, the research, its contribution and impact.

9.2 Theoretical Contribution of the Study

Park *et al.* (2010) put forward the importance of investigating the antecedents of brand attachment that also foster cognitive bond and this study built on this direction. Recall in the introduction of this chapter that CEOs from various firms and industries herald the importance on learning ways to strengthen bond with consumers (IBM, 2010). Creating and maintaining brand attachment may well be part of the solution to a growing concern regarding observed reducing levels of brand loyalty (Chandrashekar *et al.*, 2007).

Consumers who are emotionally attached to a brand are likely to be satisfied with it, but attachment is distinct from satisfaction and loyalty. Although satisfaction may stimulate both positive and negative feelings, brand attachment stimulates only positive feelings (Park *et al.*, 2010). Satisfaction and attachment share some common territories, but satisfaction occurs immediately following post-consumption experience whereas, in most cases, brand attachment develops over time, with multiple interactions and forms meaningful and deeper personal connections between consumers and brands. Hence strong attachments are encapsulated by a rich set of schemas and affectively driven memories that link the brand to the self. Meanwhile consumer loyalty is one of the consequences of satisfaction and brand attachment. However, individuals who are emotionally attached to an object also display other types of behaviour, such as separation distress, proximity, maintenance and willingness to pay a price premium (Thomson *et al.*, 2005).

Although recent research supports the application of attachment theory in marketing, existing research on brand attachment is mainly exploratory or limited to consumer-company

relationships in a single category industry (i.e. retailing or banking) and human brands (e.g. singers, politicians or athletes) (Grisaffe & Nguyen, 2011; Orth *et al.*, 2010; Vlachos *et al.*, 2010; Thomson, 2006). Furthermore the majority of existing attachment studies determine attachment as an affective phenomenon evoked by variety of emotions and left behind the cognitive part. For example, Thomson *et al.* (2005) use the term "emotional attachment" and suggest three feelings - affection, passion and connection - in relation to brand attachment. Vlachos *et al.* (2010) use the term "consumer-firm emotional attachment". Carroll and Ahuvia (2006) and Albert *et al.* (2008) use the term "love" and extract eleven dimensions of the love construct to explain consumer-brand relationship. Hence, a clearer understanding of the components of stronger brand attachment and how best to nurture this emotional and cognitive bonding between consumers and their preferred brands is needed.

It should be noted that the construct of overall brand attachment in this research includes both brand-self connection and brand prominence as a single dimension, in contrast to Park *et al.*'s two dimensions of brand attachment scale. Thus, the measurement for brand attachment in this study reflects the overall attachment as unidimensional construct, fostering both brand-self connection and brand prominence. This is due to the CFA-EFA-CFA results suggest that brand-self connection and brand prominence are formed with a single factor. This shows that the two dimensions are overlapped. Most of previous studies measure brand attachment only based on its emotional bonding (e.g. Malär *et al.*, 2011; Orth *et al.*, 2010). Fedorikhin *et al.* (2008) measure brand attachment accounting for cognitive bonding using brand-self connection. However, these authors neglected brand prominence, which has been considered as an integral part of brand attachment (Park *et al.*, 2010).

This study contributes to the methodology by validating a unidimensional scale of measuring brand attachment, which includes both brand-self connection and brand prominence. In terms of measuring brand experience, this study follows Brakus *et al.*'s (2009) brand experience scale. Again, based on the CFA-EFA-CFA results, brand experience scale loaded into two factors in contrast to four factors in the original scale. After careful examination, the brand experience scale was dropped from two factors into one factor because of the poor validity score. Hence, the brand experience construct was re-labelled into sensory brand experience. These poor results of brand experience scale can also be seen from Iglesias *et al.*'s (2011) study. These authors display that many of the loadings in each four dimensions were below the threshold (0.50).

Additionally, this study introduces a new construct – brand responsiveness. Thomson (2006) proposes three dimensions (autonomy, relatedness, and competence) to cater for the notion of an object being responsive. In his study, Thomson considers these three as different dimensions. However, based on CFA-EFA-CFA results, the three dimensions loaded into a single factor – labelled brand responsiveness. Brand responsiveness scale in this study reflects the three basic psychological needs – autonomy, relatedness and competence. Hence, if researchers would like to measure brands' responsiveness, the brand responsiveness scale validated by this study can be used.

Generally speaking, this research adds to the growing body of knowledge on the topic of consumer-brand relationships specifically brand attachment. Brand attachment has been regarded as a salient construct of interest to marketing and consumer researchers (see Thomson *et al.*, 2005; Park *et al.*, 2010; Fedorikhin *et al.*, 2008). Not only that, in order to build enduring relationships with consumers' (e.g. love for brands) that resulted in favourable outcomes; attachment is a central component (Batra *et al.*, 2012). Park and MacInnis (2006) argue that brand attachment is more likely than brand attitude in predicting higher level of consumers' behaviours that reflect commitment and consumption. Moreover, these authors argue that brand attitude is more dependent on factors such as argument strength or source credibility, whereas brand attachment is less dependent. The above arguments offer support that brand attachment is prominent and firms' managers need to increase their efforts to build stronger brand attachment (e.g. Park *et al.*, 2010; Batra *et al.*, 2012). Comprehending on what efforts need to be done by managers in order to build stronger brand attachment is crucial.

The results provide convincing empirical support for the research model, offering four important drivers of brand attachment. Almost half of the variance of brand attachment (44%) is explained by the four independent variables: (1) ideal self-congruence, (2) sensory brand experience, (3) brand responsiveness, and (4) corporate social responsibility (CSR) beliefs. By offering these four antecedents, this study expands previous research on antecedents of brand attachment as dictated by only self-congruence in a brand attachment relationship (Malär *et al.*, 2011). Additionally, the results showed a significant relationship between brand attachment and two favourable consequences, namely brand loyalty and resilience to negative information.

Attention should be given to the variance of brand attachment that has not been explained by the model. This model has resulted in a very good result. However, 56% of the variance in brand attachment is explained by other variables, such as consumer satisfaction. Orth *et al.* (2010) explain that consumer satisfaction acts as mediator to the relationship between store-evoked pleasure and arousal on brand attachment. This means consumer satisfaction is essential in explaining brand attachment. However, consumer satisfaction was not put in this study's model at this time because the objective of this research was to go beyond the satisfaction-loyalty link.

Other variables that should be able to explain the variance of brand attachment are: (1) perceived quality, (2) reputation, and (3) trust. These variables came up in the exploratory study. However, as has been discussed in Chapter 5, these variables were not included because of some overlapping with other variables in the research model. In addition to that, if these variables were included in the model, the questionnaire would have proved too cumbersome to administer and response rates would have been too low. This can also explain the low variance of brand loyalty (13%) and resilience of negative information (14%). The three variables mentioned above (quality, reputation and trust) might explain the rest of the unexplained variances. This would be worth exploring in on-going research.

This study provides a comprehensive understanding of the drivers of brand attachment, fostering brand-self connection and brand prominence – answering the call from Park *et al.* (2010). The results depicted that ideal self-congruence is positively associated with brand attachment. This research addresses a gap in the nomological network of brand attachment. This study revealed that ideal self-congruence is fully mediated by brand attachment. This is important because previous studies assume that there is a direct link between self-congruence and loyalty and therefore that achieving self-congruence will directly influence consumer loyalty (Coward *et al.*, 2008; Nam *et al.*, 2011; Kressmann *et al.*, 2006). This means increasing ideal self-congruence does not directly increase brand loyalty; higher ideal self-congruence leads to stronger brand attachment, which in the end lead to brand loyalty. For instance, if the ideal-self and brand's image fit is high, it does not mean that consumers will have higher intention on forgiving the brand for its mistakes. Higher fit increases their bonding with the brand and at some point, which the bonding can be considered to be strong, the tendency to forgive the brand for its mistakes occur. Meanwhile, most recent studies

examine only the direct effect of self-congruence on brand attachment but not brand loyalty (Malär *et al.*, 2011).

This study demonstrates the positive link between sensory brand experience and brand attachment. This provides empirical support and confirms the argument of Schmitt (2013) that brand experience is one of the key determinants of brand attachment, as well as the argument of Brakus *et al.* (2009) that brand experience leads to attachment. Dolbec and Chebat (2013), in the context of retailing, have shown that brand experience leads to emotional attachment. The present study indicates that brand experience positively affects attachment that reflects cognitive and emotional bonding. However, based on the CFA-EFA-CFA tests, brand experience scale in this study only measures the sensory dimension.

Brakus *et al.* (2009) propose that brand experience includes four dimensions, such as: sensory, affective, intellectual, and behavioural. In respect to this, further research is needed to find out the validity and reliability of the brand experience scale that reflects these four dimensions. The results also confirm a previous study (Brakus *et al.*, 2009), in that brand experience directly leads to brand loyalty. In this study, higher sensory brand experience will result in higher brand loyalty. It has been shown that brand attachment fully mediates the relationships between sensory brand experience and resilience to negative information. The higher the sensory experiences, the greater the bonding between consumer and the brand, which creates increases consumers' forgiveness towards the brand. This means increasing the level of sensory experience does not automatically increase the propensity of consumers' resilience to negative information.

Based on the results, the strongest driver of brand attachment is brand responsiveness, which confirms Thomson's (2006) study that fulfilling the three basic psychological needs is important in building attachment. Conversely to Thomson's (2006) findings indicating that competence is insignificant in the creation of strong attachment; this work found that competence, together with autonomy and relatedness, is an important indicator in creating strong attachment. This is in alignment with Patrick *et al.*'s (2007) study that shows individuals who have greater need fulfilment – encompassing autonomy, relatedness, and competence – are more motivated to be in the relationship. Increasing sense of competence together with autonomy and relatedness is also an important factor in building more secure attachment. Additionally, this study shows that CSR associations build a stronger bond

between consumer and the brand. This confirms Du, Bhattacharya and Sen's (2007) study, which found CSR beliefs to be important in building consumer-company identification. CSR beliefs are salient in building consumer-brand connections and a driver of brand prominence.

To the best of my knowledge, previous research to date has yet to empirically test the link between brand attachment and resilience to negative information. This study is the first to show that stronger brand attachment leads to higher resilience towards negative information. It is evident that when a strong bond between the consumer and brand has been established, they are more likely to forgive the brand when it conducted mistakes and violations. Bhattacharya & Sen (2003) propose that the higher the company-consumer identification will result in greater resilience to negative information. It has also been shown that brand attachment influences consumers' ethical judgment (Schmalz & Orth, 2012). This occurs because consumers consider the brand to be the reflection of their selves and become more forgiving.

The results highlight the salient role of attachment in building consumers' resilience to negative information. It is known that consumers tend to place greater diagnostic weight on negative information compared to positive information (Pullig *et al.*, 2006). Earning consumers' resilience to negative information is crucial since consumers tend to overlook and downplay any negative publicity they may receive about a brand (Xie & Peng, 2009; Bhattacharya & Sen, 2003). This study extends the model of trustworthiness factors (competence, benevolence and integrity) and consumers forgiveness (Xie & Peng, 2009). In doing so, this research demonstrates an important mediator of prior findings, brand attachment. Brand attachment partially mediates the relationships between brand responsiveness and CSR beliefs on resilience to negative information. These two variables also reflect the trustworthiness factors of Xie and Peng (2009). In addition, the present study complements existing research (e.g. Finkel *et al.*, 2002; Chung & Beverland, 2006) regarding how consumers tend to forgive and defend their brand by highlighting the role of attachment.

However, it should be noted that this effect can be attenuated when the magnitude of the mistakes and violations are beyond consumers' zone of tolerance (Bhattacharya & Sen, 2003). The relationships between ideal self-congruence and sensory brand experience toward resilience to negative information were fully mediated by brand attachment. Building ideal

self-congruence and sensory brand experience will not directly increase consumers' forgiveness. Consumers' forgiveness is achieved through strong attachments.

This study adds to the growing body of knowledge on the topic of consumer-brand relationships by proposing and testing an integrated framework for the drivers, moderators, and consequences of brand attachment. Based on a synthesis of various stream of literature, the framework includes four antecedents for brand attachment, of which two are mainly affective in nature (ideal self-congruence and sensory brand experience), while the other two are cognitive in nature (CSR-beliefs and brand responsiveness). This study relates brand attachment to two key consequences: brand loyalty and resilience to negative information. Finally, this study theorises that the links between sensory-brand experience, CSR beliefs and brand attachment with brand loyalty are moderated by attachment style – especially consumers that exhibit insecurities. The summary of the research hypotheses testing is presented in Table 9.1.

Table 9.1 Summary of the Results of the Hypotheses Testing

	Relationships	Result
H ₁	Ideal Self-Congruence → BA	Supported
H ₂	Sensory Brand Experience → BA	Supported
H ₃	Brand Responsiveness → BA	Supported
H ₄	CSR Beliefs → BA	Supported
H ₅	Brand Attachment → BL	Supported
H ₆	Brand Attachment → RNI	Supported
H _{7a}	Ideal Self-Congruence → BL	Not supported
H _{7b}	Sensory Brand Experience → BL	Supported
H _{7c}	Brand Responsiveness → BL	Not supported
H _{7d}	CSR Beliefs → BL	Supported
H _{8a}	Ideal Self-Congruence → RNI	Not supported
H _{8b}	Sensory Brand Experience → RNI	Not supported
H _{8c}	Brand Responsiveness → RNI	Supported
H _{8d}	CSR Beliefs → RNI	Supported
Moderation Analysis		
H _{9a}	Ideal Self-Congruence → BA	Not supported
H _{9b}	Sensory Brand Experience → BA	Supported
H _{9c}	Brand Responsiveness → BA	Not supported
H _{9d}	CSR Beliefs → BA	Not supported
H _{10a}	Ideal Self-Congruence → BL	Not supported
H _{10b}	Sensory Brand Experience → BL	Supported
H _{10c}	Brand Responsiveness → BL	Not supported
H _{10d}	CSR Beliefs → BL	Supported
H _{10e}	Brand Attachment → BL	Supported
H _{11a}	Ideal Self-Congruence → RNI	Not supported
H _{11b}	Sensory Brand Experience → RNI	Not supported
H _{11c}	Brand Responsiveness → RNI	Supported
H _{11d}	CSR Beliefs → RNI	Supported
H _{11e}	Brand Attachment → RNI	Not supported

9.3 Managerial Implications

Marketers could use this study as guidelines to understand on how to maximise brand attachment and leverage consumers' forgiveness. Four factors are deemed to be of importance in building stronger attachment between consumers and brands. The first factor is ideal self-congruence. Malär *et al.* (2011) indicate that it is important to pay attention not only to the internal approach, but also the external approach. The internal approach can be achieved by aligning the intended brand personality with firm tradition, culture and strategy; whereas the external approach can be achieved through the lens of the consumers. Marketers could start developing marketing activities that support their consumers' ideal-self. This can be achieved through creating an advertisement that foster consumers' ideal-self. For instance, Victoria's

Secret has used supermodels, which has been recognised as Victoria's Secret angels, in promoting their clothing lines. Another example of using advertisements to boost consumers' ideal self can be seen in fashion chain H&M's advertising. H&M have used David Beckham in promoting one of their clothing lines. David Beckham has been known to reflect a good character (e.g. captain of the England football team, face of GB at the Olympics and an 'ideal' father).

Apart from advertisements, marketers could create events that involve their consumers. For instance, General Motors created 'Interactive Design Competition'. This caters for individuals' dreams in becoming a top professional designer. Another good example can also be seen from Nivea. Nivea 'For Men' created 'The Great Football Experiment', with Sunday League team players dreaming of becoming a top professional footballer. By providing support to these men's dreams, Nivea helps them to achieve their ideal-self.

The findings suggest that sensory experience has a positive influence to brand attachment. Marketers need to focus on creating and delivering the brand experiences, in particular sensory experiences. Sensory marketing has been considered a prominent concept, but has received limited attention (Krishna, 2006, 2012). According to Krishna (2012), sensory marketing refers to activities in marketing that influence consumers' perception, judgment and behaviour by engaging their senses. Krishna argues that sensory marketing can be used to drive consumers' subconscious triggers that define their perceptions toward the brand's personality and perceived quality.

Sensory brand experience includes stimulation on the consumers' five senses, provided by a brand (Brakus *et al.*, 2009). These experiences may entice, enable and enrich consumer's self (Schmitt, 2013). Firms should create a strategy that enhances consumers' experience. This can be achieved through creating a great experience in their retail store (e.g. ambience/service). People are wondering why there are so many Apple 'aficionados' that are willing to sacrifice their resources and defend the brand. This study displays that one of the reasons is that Apple delivers their brand's promise experiences. If one visits Apple's store, that individual is able to feel and test Apple's product to its full functions (e.g. access to the internet). Previously, either one could not access the internet because there was no connection available or because of limitations in the number of product available (e.g. only one or two PC available). Besides, a firm could create an event to deliver the brand's experiences. For

example, if a car manufacturer launching a new car that promises great off-road abilities, they could create an off-road event that allow their consumers to actually test in a real situation compared to a regular test-drive. As an alternative, the firm can put the consumer as the passenger while the car is being driven by a professional off-road driver.

It should be noted that brand responsiveness is the strongest factor that influences the degree of attachment. Marketers should be able to enhance their consumers' sense of autonomy, relatedness and competence. A firm should create a strategy that continuously attempts to understand consumers' interest, perspectives, and preferences (autonomy). Marketers could achieve this through sponsoring, creating and managing a brand community (see Muniz & O'Guinn, 2001).

Regarding consumers' need for interaction (relatedness), a firm should display interest, energy and involvement towards the consumer and convey that they are important and cared for. For instance, Smart USA created 'your smart. your story.'. Through this 'share you story' programme, smart users are able to post their story with the car. Furthermore, Smart USA holds 'meet and greet' events to connect their consumers. This programme has increased not only the relationships between the owners with their surroundings, but also the relationships between the consumers and the brand. Another way of creating a sense of relatedness can be seen from Tesco's effort in creating the 'Mum of the Year Award'. Through this programme, a mother can be nominated (by her family or friends) for her extraordinary works (e.g. helping others).

Subsequently, a firm should be able to provide a structure that support or enhance consumers' sense of competence. Marketers should create tactical efforts to build experience that helps in increasing consumers' sense of efficacy. Park *et al.* (2006) note that FedEx's overnight delivery assurance and Swiss Army Knives' versatile applications help increasing consumers' sense of efficacy. Marketers may then craft these mastery experiences, as with GoPro's offering through their products. These experiences should also be supported by other factors (e.g. appropriate background music in the store or in the webpage). It has been noted that the choice of a wrong endorser could resulted in consumers feeling incompetent (see Thomson, 2006). Therefore, marketers should be very careful in creating campaigns and choosing endorsers.

Finally, marketers need to communicate and increase consumers' awareness of their CSR activities in order to build strong bonding with their consumers. It is important for a firm to create a two-way communication. A firm can create a proactive strategy that involves their consumers to communicate the CSR activities, specifically through purchasing programmes. For instance, TOMS, a shoe company, with its 'one for one' programme. Not only that, TOMS gives their consumers a chance to participate in giving shoes to the children in need all over the US. Additionally, marketers can highlight their brand's emotional appeal through well thought-out activities that engender memorable experiences. For instance, Waitrose gives their consumers a green coin as a part of the transaction and the consumers can drop the green coin into one of the three boxes to nominate which local organisations receive that store's charitable donations each month.

9.4 Limitations and Further Research

Though the present study offers a significant advance in understanding the drivers of brand attachment, it is not without limitations. It should be underlined that the association of the constructs in the research model is from cross-sectional survey data. Similarly, the framework was tested with UK residents, in a county - Oxfordshire. Hence, the findings of this study may not be generalised into different areas with different cultural background. A longitudinal study and the testing of the framework in a different cultural context are needed. Additionally, future studies could design an experimental study to examine the cause-effect relationships between brand attachment with its antecedents and consequences. This is due to the fact, as has been discussed above, that a descriptive research design cannot be used to infer causation.

In the questionnaire, respondents were asked to choose one of their favourite brands and answer based on that. The decision to ask the respondents to choose their favourite brand was based on the fact that the aim of the study was to understand the prominent factors that build strong attachment towards a particular brand. Thus, it was relevant to ask for the respondents' favourite brands since consumers with strong attachment would greatly inform this study. Nevertheless, a future study could consider asking participants to rate a variety of brands than focussing on their *favourite* brand, so as to capture more variance. Moreover, the sample size of this study is also a limitation. Hair *et al.* (2010) indicate that models with large numbers of constructs should have at least a minimum sample size of 500. Thus, future study should use larger sample size.

Additionally, all constructs in this study were measured using measurements available from previous research. Based on this analysis, not all of the items loaded toward the constructs (e.g. brand attachment, brand experience). This outcome should be examined further through future studies to ascertain whether these measurements will load similarly to this study or not. It would also be beneficial to test the validity and reliability of the scales used in this research in a different context.

Future research needs to examine other moderating variables that can influence the relationships between brand attachment and antecedents, as well as the relationships between brand attachment and any consequences. For instance, it has been discussed that although strong brand attachment leads to higher resilience to negative information, this link can be attenuated by the magnitude of the mistakes. Therefore, it will be fruitful to test different levels of mistakes being conducted by the brand. Another possible moderating variable might be the length of usage of the selected brand. Consumers who have been using the brands for 10 years or above may have differences of opinion compared with consumers who have been using their brands for short period of time (e.g. 1-2 years).

Further research is needed to investigate the negative consequences of brand attachment. Grégoire and Fisher (2006) put forward the notion of ‘love is blind’ and ‘love becomes hate’. It has been noted by Johnson *et al.* (2011) that brand with high self-relevance can lead to negative consequences such as payback and complaining behaviours. Thomson *et al.* (2012) show that attachment style predicts anti-brand actions. Therefore, it is also possible that brand attachment leads to these negative behaviours. When does this occur? What factors cause it to occur? Further inspections on what factors will moderate or mediate the relationships between brand attachment and its negative consequences are worthwhile.

9.5 Reflections

I embarked on a long and gruelling research path almost three years ago as part of my journey to obtain a doctoral degree, which I needed to take my career to another level. At the beginning of my journey, I found that the person who was going to be my supervisor was indisposed. This was a very big challenge, as I was faced with a condition full of uncertainties. However, there were two professors who stepped-up to help. They took me under their supervision and gave me full support – not only as replacement supervisors. This

was when I realised that it is very important in having good supervisors who are ready to support in this long journey.

I began my journey with my two supervisors in narrowing my research topic. Fortunately, one of my supervisors said that my proposal was sufficiently directional that it required little modification. I chose 'brand attachment' as the topic of interest. Why did I choose this particular topic? I chose to focus on this topic because it is closely related to consumer behaviour and the realm of psychology. I personally think that human behaviour is greatly affected by psychology. Hence, I began a review of the literature about this topic: in order to contribute, I needed to know what has been stated and where current research is heading. In the process of reviewing the literature, I encountered another problem – the quality of the papers that I am interested to read. Being a doctoral student means being critical. It is not always the case that when an article has been published in a top journal, the article is perfect. On the other hand, it is also not always the case that when an article has been published in a low rank journal, the article is atrocious. Reflecting on this, I believe that it is very important to be critical. However, in order to be critical, one should have a good knowledge on the particular topic or issue.

If I had the chance to do this all over again, I would still choose brand attachment as the main topic of interest. Why? It is because attachment is a very interesting topic. However, Attachment can act as 'double-edged sword'. On the one hand, extant literature discusses the salient of attachment towards various favourable consequences to firms (e.g. Schmalz & Orth, 2012; Park *et al.*, 2010). While on the other hand, attachment can also lead to unfavourable behaviours (e.g. Johnson *et al.*, 2011; Thomson *et al.*, 2012). This means that much more attention is needed in understanding the construct of attachment. However, I would also need to broaden the literature, in particular to include the area of marriage and separation.

After reviewing the literature, I began addressing the gap. Three months in from when I started the programme, my supervisors asked me to write a conference paper. I never had written a conference paper before. I began to search for information related to the conference. The deadline for submission of this particular conference was in mid-January 2012, the conference itself was going to be held in July 2012. The submission allowed for only a maximum of five pages together with the references. I began to learn how to convey a lot of information in a very limited space. The big question is: How one should do it effectively?

From what I learned, the story should be straight to the point. Avoid repetitions and stop 'beating around the bush'. However, one should remember that not all of the readers understand or have prior knowledge to the topic in the article. Regarding the references, one should be selective in selecting the references. Not all of them need to be cited in the body of the text. One could select one or two references from a group of references using 'e.g.' and/or cutting repeating references.

In the UK, when one enrolls as a doctoral student, one does not automatically become a PhD candidate. There are several steps that should be passed. First, one should undertake a registration stage to register as an MPhil/PhD student. Second, one should undertake a transfer stage to become a PhD candidate. Third, if one would like to collect primary data, one should complete an ethics document. For the registration and transfer stage, one should prepare a short document outlining the research (e.g. its rationale/significance) to be submitted to a University committee. Before submitting it to the University committee, the document should be submitted and defended (in a mini Viva) before the Faculty committee. The same procedure also applies to the ethics document, although one does not need to defend the ethics document.

The whole process takes a lot of time because the committee does not hold the meeting to discuss the registration and transfer documents every month. Even the Faculty committee has its own timeline for submitting the documents to them. The process, in my personal opinion, is the one causing students (with poor time management) who are unable to finish their study within the timeframe (3 years). A doctoral programme is very different from an undergraduate or master's programme. It is very independent. Hence, a doctoral student needs to have a very good time management. Having gone through the whole processes, I found that these processes are overlapping. One should plan thoroughly since the beginning of the programme and aware that some can be done at the same time. One should not wait on a process (e.g. registration stage) to start another process (e.g. ethics document).

Designing the research looms in my reflections. There are several types of research (Malhotra, 2010): (1) exploratory research, (2) descriptive research and (3) causal research. Since the topic of interest is investigating the antecedents and consequences of brand attachment, I planned to conduct descriptive research. At that time I did not plan for an exploratory research at all. However, upon reading the literature and discussing with my supervisors, I decided to

use a mixed-method strategy – combining exploratory and descriptive research. I found that quite a lot of people debating the choice of between qualitative and quantitative research. Some even label themselves as quantitative or qualitative researchers – trying to belittle each other. In my opinion, one should choose the research approach based on the research question itself. For instance, if the topic is very new and there is no theory available, it is appropriate to use qualitative study. If one would like to test determine the extent to which marketing constructs are associated, one could use Structural Equation Modelling (SEM).

The biggest challenge in this research was collecting the data, particularly when I collected the survey data using questionnaires. At first, I tried to collect them using intercept technique in public places (e.g. train stations, shopping malls). However, I could not obtain their attention. They said ‘no’ even before I finished explaining the purpose of the research. I then changed my strategy into using mail questionnaires. I distributed 2,500 mail questionnaires to randomly chosen housing areas in Oxfordshire (e.g. Oxford and Wheatley). However, the response rate was still low. I distributed an additional 2,500 mail questionnaires to different housing areas (e.g. Kiddlington and Abingdon). Still, the number of valid questionnaires received was not enough. Running out of funds, I decided to use an electronic survey through using Survey Monkey. Data collection is always a challenge anywhere in the world. It would be better if one could obtain more funding to compromise with this issue. These days, there is an increase in academic research using professional market research companies to collect the data. In addition to that, firms are helping academic research in collecting data through collaborative works. This needs to be established by the University since it would be very hard for an individual, specifically a doctoral student, to build this kind of networking.

Having discussed this, I do think that it would be better to collect the data in my home country (Indonesia). There are some advantages of doing this there. First, it would be easier for me to collect the data since I understand more how to gain more responses and use my networks. This also means that I do not have to collect the data using two different methods. Second, Indonesia is a developing country and has a large number of populations, which is a lucrative market for most firms. It is important for firms to understand more about Indonesian consumers.

As discussed above, the questionnaire was designed so that respondents chose their favourite brand. Thus, it can be seen from the results that these people have strong affinity towards their

selected brand. For instance, the results show that 54% of the respondents have been using the brand for 10 years or above. This is the gist of the study, since I wanted to understand how these people create strong bonding with their brands. However, it would also be interesting to know whether the model also works for others. For instance, Fournier and Alvarez (2013) mention about different typologies of attachment, such as ‘brand flings’. Flings reflect people with strong attachment towards the brands, but with less exposure towards the brands (e.g. less than 1 year of usage). Comparing this group with those with ten years or above of affinity to their selected brand would be very interesting.

Analysing the quantitative data was also a challenge. First, the biggest challenge was in the availability of the software. I decided to use SEM because it has been considered the best technique to analyse multiple series of regressions (Hair *et al.*, 2010). However, the university did not have the software for SEM. Fortunately my supervisor was able to arrange for the software to be available. SEM has been widely used in conducting descriptive research. Even for some journals, they tend not to publish article using simple or multiple regression analysis without using SEM. Thus, it is important for a university to arrange the availability of this software. Nowadays, experimental designs gain popularity. This means that universities need to be ready to adapt by providing the infrastructure. For instance, many universities these days have behavioural lab equipped with technologies, such as eye tracking.

Second is the availability of workshops, seminars, and instructors to assist in using the software. Learning to use new software is never an easy task. Although the University provides training, it does not provide advanced materials (e.g. SEM), which I needed. Again, fortunately my supervisor was able to invite the eminent Prof. Joe Hair, to deliver two workshops on SEM. However, there was still much uncovered by these two workshops, such as multi-group moderation analysis. Besides, there are new techniques available for use, such as partial least square (PLS). It would be good if there was more support from the University for Doctoral students to master PLS or any other techniques.

Were I in the position to tackle this research differently, I would choose to combine SEM with experiments – in particular laboratory experiments. First, it is because experimental design, which is common in the physical sciences, has gained popularity in business and the social sciences (Hair *et al.*, 2010). Second, laboratory experiments provide advantages compared to field experiments. According to Malhotra *et al.* (2012), laboratory experiments

have these three advantages compared to field experiments: (1) they minimise the effects of history by offering a high degree of control through isolating the experiment in a carefully monitored environment, (2) they produce the same results if repeated with similar participants – leading to high internal validity, and (3) they are less expensive because of small number of participants, last for a shorter time and are easier to conduct than field experiments.

The last bit in this reflection section is about publication. At the end of the day, the objective of good research is to publish so that others can use it to address problems. The publication field is another arena, greatly different to the Doctoral programme. I was fortunate enough to be able to gain knowledge of this publishing process since I managed to put forward two articles for publication. I learned that although one has really good and interesting research (e.g. an advanced methodology), it does not mean that one can easily pass the editors. One needs to craft a really interesting and concise background. This is because most of the editors will only have time to read the abstract and introduction. “A well-written journal submission should offer a consistent, logical and involving story highlighting the contribution of the empirical research” (Peracchio & Escalas, 2008, p. 197). The author should be able to craft a good story. A good story is both persuasive and enduring, which is able to convey the conceptual contribution and convince the reader that this contribution is worthy of publication (Peracchio & Escalas, 2008).

Before paying attention to crafting a paper for journal submission, one should also pay attention towards the research itself. The research is supposed to be attractive. Park (2012) categorises two types of attractive research: cute research and beautiful research. According to Park, cute research is research that produces incomplete but interesting knowledge; whereas beautiful research is research that produces complete and useful knowledge. In embarking into a research, a researcher should make sure that his/her research is either a beautiful or cute research. Cute research is a research with novel and interesting theoretical ideas and empirical findings, which develops an alternative explanation of existing theory and existing findings, develops a theory of commonly held beliefs, develops a new theory, contains novel and interesting findings that refute commonly held beliefs, prior theory or prior explanatory processes (Park, 2012).

Noticing that the Doctoral programme these days has started to change by embedding publication (PhD by publication), I think that this may be better for preparing the students as

better academics and researchers. In this concluding reflection section, I find myself as a more mature researcher through experiences. There is no 'one for all' guideline that fits every students or researchers. One should be able to adapt and try to find a solution for every different situation.

Summarising, this research provides six essential contributions to the body of knowledge. First, this research offers a conceptual framework for creating stronger brand attachment across categories. Second, the measurement of brand attachment in this study reflects both cognitive and affective bonding, unlike previous studies, which used only emotional bonding. Third, this study offers empirical support to the link between brand experience and brand attachment. Fourth, this study also offers empirical support to show that brand attachment leads to resilience to negative information. Fifth, this study offers insights to the nomological network in which ideal self-congruence operates. Ideal self-congruence does not directly influence brand loyalty, but influences brand loyalty through brand attachment. Sixth, this study believes that not all consumers are the same. Insecure consumers are hard to manage and handle. This can be seen that the links between brand attachment with its antecedents and consequences are moderated by attachment style – especially consumers that exhibit insecurities.

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Appendices

Appendix 1: Semi-Structured Interviews Protocol

Introduction

Hi, welcome to the interview session.

I am a PhD student in the department of Marketing at Oxford Brookes University. As part of my PhD program, I am currently investigating brand attachment. It would be very helpful, if you could spare your time to do the interview. You will be asked about your thoughts and feelings and actions, both positive and negative, toward specific brands you know and use.

The session takes approximately 60 minutes to complete. Your participation in this session is completely voluntary and greatly appreciated. As participants, you reserve the right to leave this session at any time without penalty and without giving reason. The information you provide will only be used for academic purposes and remain strictly confidential. Hereafter, you will be identified by gender and age only; your name will never be associated with any of your answers.

Should you have any questions about the session, you may ask me directly after the session or contact me using the contact details provided below. Thank you very much for your time and co-operation.

Background

The background to the research is detailed in the participant information sheet. In summary, the research aims to understand the antecedents and consequences of brand attachment. We would like to know consumers' thoughts and feelings toward specific brands that they purchase or use.

Objectives

- Explore consumers' perspective on "attachment."
- Explore consumers' relationship or attachment with brand.
- Investigate on how consumers develop attachment with the brand (factors that help in developing the attachment).
- Investigate on consumers' behavioural actions arising from having attachment with the brand.

As informant enters, ask him or her to complete the consent form and inform the informant about confidentiality and audio recorder.

Warm Up Questions

- Please tell me a bit about yourself!
 - What do you like to do in your spare time?
 - What are your hobbies?
 - Etc.

Perceptions of Attachment

- What comes to your mind when you hear the word "attachment"?
- In your view, what is the meaning of it or how do you describe it?

The Brand

- Do you like to shop? Do you do your own shopping?
- Where do you shop? (Channels, locations, frequency, etc.)
- Considering all the different brands that you use (For example: clothing, cars, sporting goods, electronics, magazines, stores, restaurants, and so forth), please think and name the brand that is your **most favourite brand**!
- How long have you been using this brand?
- Can you describe your relationship with this brand (e.g., frequency of interaction, strength and type of association)?
- What is the type of your relationship bond (e.g., instrumental, affective, liking versus passionate love)?

Antecedents of Brand Attachment

- Why is it your favourite brand? Is this brand special for you?
- Why do you feel attached to this brand?
- What do you feel when using this brand?
- Can you share your story/history with this brand?

Consequences of Brand Attachment

- Do you think that you have support or have done something for this brand? In what way?
- Do you willing to invest time, energy, money or other resources to get to know this brand better? Please explain further!

Closing

- Ask him or her to fill in the information questions!
- Ask him or her to do the sentence completion activity!
- Ask whether he or she knows somebody that might be interested in the study and willing to be interviewed!
- Thank you.

Appendix 2: Information Questions

Information Questions

Q1. Gender:

☐ Male ☐ Female

Q2. Age: ()

Q3. Occupation Please specify: ()

Q4. Highest Level of Qualification:

☐ Secondary school ☐ A-level or equivalent ☐ Master's Degree

☐ GCSE or equivalent ☐ Bachelor's Degree ☐ Other: ()

Q5. Income per Annum (in £):

☐ Up to 10,000 ☐ 20,001 to 30,000 ☐ 40,001 and over

☐ 10,001 to 20,000 ☐ 30,001 to 40,000

Appendix 3: Sentence Completion

Please think about the brand that you have mentioned previously that you feel that you are strongly attached to/extremely hard to part with/closest to/most favourite brand. Think about your relationship with the brand and then complete these sentences.

“I think my relationship with [this brand] means.....
.....”

“[This brand] always.....
.....”

“If [this brand] disappeared, I would.....
.....”

“[This brand] never.....
.....”

“When I encountered [this brand], I never realized.....
.....”

“For [this brand] I will
.....”

“If [this brand] disappointed me, I would.....
.....”

Appendix 4: Semi-Structured Interviews Transcription

Researcher (R); Interviewee (I)

R: Thank you for your time for the interview.

I: My pleasure.

R: Before we start, I would like to explain several things for you. The session will takes approximately 60 minutes to complete. And your participation is completely voluntary and greatly appreciated. You reserve the right to leave the session at anytime without penalty and without giving reasons. The information you provide will only be used for academic purposes and remain strictly confidential. Hereafter you will be identified by gender and age so your name will never be associated to any of you answers and there are no right or wrong answers. The answers are only based on your feelings and thoughts. Any questions before we start?

I: No

R: Ok, can you tell me a bit of yourself?

I: Hmm, I don't know what to say.

R: Maybe about your work?

I: I'm a PhD student here and tutor. I'm the module leader for corporate governance for Msc. I designed the course content and I deliver it. I also look after the people who teach in the module.

R: How long have you been teaching?

I: 3 years, that's Oxford Brookes, 3 years, but I taught elsewhere for probably about 6 years, part time.

R: Ok, is that your main job?

I: No...no...no, I am a consultant.

R: Can you tell me a bit on that?

I: Yeah, maybe coming up with business proposal and helping business in terms of strategic formulation, strategic delivery, and sustainability.

R: And, what do you like to do in your spare time?

I: I play golf...I am a flyer...I fly...I am looking toward my pilot license. I like swimming as well...I like outdoor, just taking a walk the countryside, and I like driving...fast cars.

R: Interesting hobbies.

I: Yes, I love a fast life.

R: Do you watch professional golf tournament?

I: Yeah, I do.

R: Do you have any favourite player?

I: Obviously Tiger Woods.

R: So, do you play regularly now?

I: Hmm, ever since I started my PhD, I play maybe once every 3 months.

R: Once every 3 months?

I: Yeah, not very regular but in summer I tend to play almost every second weekend.

R: Oh...

I: In winter it's difficult because it's cold.

R: What do you do then in the winter? Swimming?

I: Winter...swimming...indoor swimming... Yeah, I do that and driving a lot but mainly because of the PhD, I have been focusing on the PhD.

R: How about driving? Since when did you actually enjoy fast cars?

I: I have always enjoyed fast cars. When I was 18, my father bought me my first car. Which was a Mini Cooper, I converted it into a rally car for sport...so I put metal bars and big tyre...you know to make it a bit rapid for racing...so yeah that was when I started.

R: Any story on your driving experience?

I: Hmm...no, not really, no...none. I just enjoy it...and the fact that I work here and do my PhD here and living in Nottingham, mean that I got 2 hours' worth of driving, the only story are the tickets because I guess...tickets...yeah, six months ago I got a ticket...I was doing 94 miles/hours and they gave me 2 points and...no...3 points and 60 pounds...so I need to be careful now.

R: What did you feel when you're driving fast car and when you're driving like 94 miles/hours? What did you feel at that time?

I: It's just the thrill of it...you know...the thrill of the speed. If you go to Germany, in the Autobahn, which is their motorway...sounds stupid, but you can go down as you like...it's dangerous but if you're careful and your car is roadworthy, it's Ok...you are not endangering anyone.

R: Were you also in a competition before?

I: I've never gone into competition, the only competition I went was not like professional competition but was organized by a group of friends, you booked a race track, we just go there...or go out, I grew up in the farm, so out in the farm we sort of race...but not professional competition.

R: How long, let's say, do you spend for driving apart from the 2 hours going back home and work?

I: I don't necessarily do driving, I do it like...weekend...if I get time and there are friends and there's a place where we can mess around, we do that. But I don't take time to do it, it's a part time but I do it in my spare time and I've been doing it like I said when I was 18, I got my first car and that's when it started.

A: Do you also enjoy modifying [car] yourself?

I: Oh yeah...yeah. I love it. I buy cars...trying to fix them and change them, change things and looks different and I think like old car like 1960s, 1970s and then we change them and give them modern look.

R: What did it gives you, in terms of feelings?

I: I guess it's the...the satisfaction. Having done something successfully, it's like conquering and changing something, making it...your own design.

R: Let's say if you hear the word attachment, what first comes to your mind?

I: Attachment? From like an emotional connection...hmm...some kind of...you feel close, you feel connected...you feel drawn to something.

R: To something. Can you explain more about it?

I: Well...no...it couldn't ...I'm attached to Iphone...since the first Iphone came out I've had every version of Iphones. Now I got the Iphone 5, so I'm attached. I don't even think whether it's a good product or not when it comes out I have to have it.

R: Ok, why is that?

I: I don't know...you know the usage of the product at a time, besides Apple have an image of quality, they have an image of high standard of quality, easy to use, they have good reputation...the kind of profile of people who use the product tend to be well meaning people...drives me to the profit.

R: Do you have any emotions toward Iphone or toward Apple?

I: I think...I don't know what to say...but...Steve Jobs who were the founder...the founder and CEO...I guess I respected him for the innovation...somehow I feel drawn to his product...my connection with Apple is weakening ever since he died...because somehow I feel that the company won't come up with good products like down under his leadership. So my connection is with the person not with the product, so through him I came to like the Ipad.

R: But the latest Iphone was actually released way after Steve Job died.

I: Yeah, what I mean is my initial attraction to the product was in respect of the man and the quality that he stood for. But when I got the latest Iphone, I wasn't as happy when I got my

first Iphone, because I was in a queue for about 6 hours to get my first Iphone. I was in a queue from 3 a.m and I got it very late, so when you look at that, I didn't queue this time, because a friend of mine works for Apple so he sorted it out and I just went to pick it up, but the connection...the strength of the connection, it's not the same. I like because it's Apple...but I'm not sure if it amazing as the first one.

R: So let's say if they will launch another Iphone, Iphone 6, will you buy it?

I: I'm not sure, if you asking me a few years ago and say...another Iphone, I would definitely say yes but right now I'm not sure. There are others contending products in the market, for example...the Samsung galaxy, which uses the same technology as the Apple, so I need to think.

R: So, previously you...

I: Oh yes, definitely. I would have not thought but just gone for it. But now I'm not sure.

R: So, do you think you have already supported Apple?

I: I've already supported them? I have...yeah...in the sense that...Iphone...the first Iphone...and the Iphone 3...3G...the Iphone 4...Iphone 4S...now the Iphone 5...so five different version of products. I also bought alone an apple Mac, and I have...I've been spending on lots of their products...I bought headphones, I bought all sort of things...so I think I've been an Apple person for a long time, but I think you are starting to see better quality products in the market. Whether they've got the same appeal as Apple, I don't think so...because Apple, they are very good at presenting their brand and making you connect to it. The other people just sell their products...they don't sell that emotional attachment. Apple represents feelings which represent a lifestyle, it represents an aspirational value so when you have an Iphone, people will like...“oh have a look”...something that people are aspire to, whereas the Samsung sounds common and therefore it doesn't make you feel that proud to own one, if you know what I mean. It's the status that associated with you when you have an Iphone that aspirational status, that when you have one you feel you belong...it's like a club... it feels like you belong to the club.

R: Do you think you have a similar lifestyle to Apple or to people using Apple?

I: Well, I noticed a lot of people who use Apple, use it what we can do for them...and sometimes organizing your life, the ease of operation is brilliant. So, in a sense...yes I do, but what is a lifestyle...you created, as an individual you may see other people do something but you create your own because you got a space that you own with your gadget and you operate within that space, but it's all shared like a club.

R: What do you feel now, when you are using your Iphone?

I: I feel good...feel good...I waited a long time for the Iphone. So, I guess that's the strength of the feelings that I have...my contract expired probably 12 months ago and I waited for 12 months before I could get the new phone...So, happy that it's here.

R: When we're discussing about it you spent time...your resources... in terms of time for Apple. Do you think you will spend any other resources like energy, money maybe to get to know Apple better?

I: Oh yeah...yeah...yeah...yeah, I mean I bought 2 books by Steve Jobs, one is his autobiography and he talks about how he started Apple, and the other one about Apple as a company. So, I spent money trying to understand the company and how it works. But I would say that Apple is a fantastic corporate machine. They are very successful, as one of the most profitable company in the world, and so when you look at that. I am a business person...I admire good things, so I have to stop and think...what are they doing...in order to be able attract such a good customer and maintain it. So, in a way I want to know about it.

R: So you said that you have certain attachment to Steve Jobs as well...

I: Yeah, as a person...yeah.

R: Did you know Steve Job when he worked in Apple or when he got kicked out from Apple?

I: I knew him before...not personally...but, I knew of him before when he started Apple. The first Apple Mac, my family had a computer...an Apple Mac. And when he got kicked out...I actually thought it's a good thing because I thought Steve...he has knew the company for so long, perhaps a new person can take it far, but then when things were started going a bit wrong, and he came back and changed things. That's when I, sort of, started liking him, so it's from that point I was very fond of what he was doing.

R: But before that, actually, did you have any attachment to Apple?

I: My family had an Apple computer...so yes, just like I told you, it's a family thing but I wasn't crazy about. If I went out to buy my own computer, I won't be able to afford an Apple mac at that time. No, I wasn't that attached. We were using one and it was just a tool. But when Steve came back and revised the company that's when I sort of switched my interest...I thought...hmm...this man went away, the company performed badly, now he came back and he changed things...there must be something in it...and that time away allowed him to think differently and I respect that, when a man can reflect and change what he does.

R: Any other things or any other factors?

I: Not really, he's just a boring personality. Personality wise he's boring, but in terms of intellect, innovation, he was great...in terms of businessman...he was great. So as a

person...[no]...as entrepreneur or business person, yes. I wouldn't be friend with him and play golf with him...no. He's not my type of friend.

R: Let's say, if case, if somebody say negative things about Apple in front of you. How do you react to that?

I: Well, it depends on whether they're factual or not. I mean people do that every day, people criticize and say..."Oh Samsung galaxy is better"...I listened to the argument...some people talk about Apple products from a positional ignorance, but never use them. This is a democratic country and has freedom of speech, so they can say whatever they want, but...when somebody obviously saying something that's not true...I use an Apple product I leave them to fact...do they present fact?...I respect that, but if they say something that's not true because they heard other people saying that, I challenged them...because I tell them ...no, I thought it doesn't do that, but if yours does that then it's different....or maybe you don't know how to use it...if I found people come to say that Samsung Galaxy is cheaper, I can't argue with that, and it's using the same technology...but it's not an Apple. That's why Apple is more profitable.

R: Let's say we move from Apple, you said that you like driving, and you like car. Do you have any brand that actually you are attached with?

I: I drive German cars. Yeah...I don't drive anything that's not from Germany.

R: Any particular brand?

I: I drive Mercedes and Audi...those are my two brands. Mercedes, because I grew up from a family where my father drove a Mercedes and appreciated the value...I've never driven BMW, although it's German...but I love Audi. So, it's Mercedes Benz and Audi.

R: You said you love Audi?

I: Yeah.

R: Can you describe more on that?

I: Well, it's a...hmm...how do you notice it's not as expensive as Mercedes Benz but they give you good quality car. They give you something respectable. In the UK, they talked about what they called a 'street cred'.

R: 'Street cred'?

I: 'Street cred'...another word is street credibility of your car. So, German cars have street cred whereas Vauxhall or other brands may not. It's a subjective view. So, I believe in German cars...they are efficient machine...yeah. If I'm on a motorway, driving a Vauxhall, perhaps I would struggle to do 94 miles/hours and get a ticket. But, if you are in a Mercedes Benz, you hardly feel the wind and you don't realize that you are doing 94

miles/hours...yeah...because it's so comfortable, it shows relax and the engine is not under strains...and it doesn't feel wobbly...it's still quiet and settle and you know...like a bullet.

R: Out of the two, Mercedes Benz and Audi, which one do you feel...Which ones do you love more?

I: Mercedes.

R: Mercedes, why?

I: Again, with the history in the family. We had a Mercedes; we've got a 1980 Mercedes. It still working, it's old but still works. So, from that perspective I love Mercedes and they come up with innovative products...they take you by...you know...you feel attached to the products. It's a status symbol, it's a functional product, but again it's something that is aspirational. When I worked for a company they gave me a Mercedes...and because they said you can choose between these...I said I'll have the Mercedes, thank you. So, when you drive that...people are saying..."Oh, the boss is driving a Mercedes"...so there's an element of status. So you feel you've got 'the tool'...you've got 'the car'.

R: Let's say if you are going to buy your next car, will it be a Mercedes?

I: It will be.

R: Or an Audi?

I: Most probably Mercedes. It will be a Mercedes.

R: Why? You said many things about the quality of Mercedes, do Audi has that as well?

I: Audi and Mercedes are not at the same level, Mercedes is up here and Audi is close behind. And they give you different things, they give you quality, they give you satisfaction, but the level of attachment for me, Mercedes is here, Audi is behind. The one thing I like about Mercedes is that their vehicle cut across the range. So, if I wanted a 4x4, I can go and get the ML, if I wanted a small car and energy efficient, I can go and get an A class. Or I can get a bit blue efficient range...you know that's the level of energy efficient that uses less fuel. If I wanted a very luxurious car when I don't drive myself and sit at the back, I go and get an S class. So, that the range for every need...you know...if I want just a small car but respectable, I get a C class or E. So, you've got everything that you want within the range. It's a respected one...it's the brand that is behind it.

R: You said you love Mercedes Benz. Do you have any specific feelings toward Mercedes Benz?

I: Hmm...like, what kind of feelings?

R: Maybe, let's say, do you have passion toward Mercedes Benz?

I: I do...yeah...yeah...I passionately love my Mercedes. I mean...a good example is that, I got a Mercedes Benz, which I bought...probably...it's my first Mercedes Benz...I bought another about 4 years ago, but when I bought it, I changed the wheels...I painted them in different colour. So that when you looked at the car and looked at the wheels, you see it different. So, for me is that I am looking after my car...I wash it myself...I don't take it to a carwash. I polish it. I Hoover it, I spray it with nice perfume...I paint the engine.

R: Let's say if your Mercedes Benz is a person, how do you consider your relationship with it?

I: That would be very close, it would be very close.

R: More than a friend? Or is it a friend for you?

I: Hmm...a very close friend. One that I rely on and passion on it...because I know that when I start the key it's going to perform, it's going to deliver. I have no doubt, so friend like that...a friend can change their mind...I think this is more than a friend. The loyalty...it's like a loyal friend...who is always there for me...so the connection there.

R: Do you think that you are loyal to Mercedes Benz?

I: I am, I am, I've been loyal to them. I bought their product, I've bought so many products, like car...four...five years and you can change and get the new one. But in this harsh economic time, you find that you spend more time with your car.

R: Any other things that you have done for Mercedes Benz?

I: I buy silly things...really...like I bought key rings, Mercedes Benz key rings. I bought memory stick...Mercedes Benz memory stick...it looks like a Mercedes Benz key but it's a memory stick. I bought cups, Mercedes Benz cups, tea cups, I've got umbrella, I've got the caps, t-shirts...I think I have supported for...for Mercedes Benz...yeah...because sometimes if you buy car, they will give you small gifts. Sometimes you buy them...it's not very expensive...so it identifies you...as a person.

R: So what do you feel when you wearing those things, apart from the car itself?

I: It feels like you belong to a group, a club, a respected group.

R: Say if somebody said negative things about Mercedes Benz, how will you react?

I: Again, are they talking fact? Or they just talking...sometimes they just talk. If they just talking, I challenged them...are they talking the fact...I mean one out of ten...for example, the ML, it used to have wiring problem...electrical problem, and it would always give signals...they're false...when particularly people said that Mercedes is rubbish, rubbish and so I will look and say mine does that as well, but does it mean it's rubbish? But Mercedes corrected it. Look the car has a problem. Sometimes people say to me that Mercedes Benz is

no very reliable off-road. And that's not true. I said I have Mercedes in farm, in Africa and it works perfectly and I challenge people like that and say look I have driven an ML...in a farm in Africa...in a very rough terrain, I don't know what you're talking about. Maybe you have problem with yours but mine didn't do that. It performed so perhaps it could be the different here. And then I asked where did you test it? Some of them say..."no, I took it up here"...that's rubbish. So if it doesn't sound true I challenged it. If it sounds true well we've got to swallow our pride. But generally you don't want people to talk negatively about the product that you are using. You defend it, because if you are that passionate about it, it makes you feel rubbish when people talk about your product so that's why you defend it. But you don't go out of your way to fight a war for Apple or Mercedes. But...it's not my company...I use their products, but it's not my company.

R: But you said that, you feel that you belong to that community?

I: I belong to the community but I don't own the company. So I can't fight or appear in a war for them. The reason why I challenged people is not because I love the company, I love their products and defending my product...I don't want people to think that this is rubbish, cause I spent money on it, so it's not rubbish. If they are saying that it's rubbish, they are challenging my decision for buying this product. So I defend the decision from buying the product that's what I'm defending.

R: Can you think any other factors that actually influence you attachment to either Mercedes Benz or Audi or Apple?

I: I think its family...mainly. It's family and people around you...when you go out eating a particular type of food, you begin to like it and it becomes a part of you...like I say I grew up [with] my father used a Mercedes Benz and I like it...and as family...it performs and therefore we believe that believe that it's reliable, it works and so we stays with it. For Apple, it's people around me...talking about Apple and we had an Apple Mac computer in the family and so...I wasn't really emotionally connected to particularly there...and then when Steve left and the company started doing bad...the stories in the market got me interested in the company...and so when the Iphone came out...and there was lots of news about it, I went for it. And from then on, I never looked back. So...family, friends, but also the media...when the media was talking lots of positive thing about Apple...so you feel that you don't want to be left behind...you want to join in and enjoy.

R: Anything else that you would like to add?

I: No, not really.

R: Ok, thank you and I need you to fill in this form.

Appendix 5: Research Questionnaire after Pretesting

Dear Sir/Madam,

I am a researcher from the Department of Marketing at Oxford Brookes University. As part of my research, I am currently investigating brands and how consumers feel about them.

It would be very helpful, if you could please fill out the following survey. **The survey takes approximately 15 minutes to complete.** You will be asked to complete a series of questions about your thoughts and feelings toward specific brands you know and use.

Your participation in this survey is completely voluntary and greatly appreciated. As participants, you reserve the right to leave this survey at any time without penalty and without explanation. The information you provide will only be used for academic purposes and will remain strictly confidential. Hereafter, you will be identified by number only; your name will never be associated with any of your answers.

Should you have any questions about the survey, you may contact me using the contact details provided below. Thank you very much for your time and co-operation.

Regards,

Arnold Japutra
Department of Marketing
Faculty of Business
Oxford Brookes University
Email: arnold.japutra-2011@brookes.ac.uk

The Brand Attachment Survey

Section 1: About Your Choice of The Brand

Direction Please think for a moment about all the different brands you purchase or use. Try to consider the whole range of brands that you purchase or use including, for example, food products, clothing, airlines, beverages, personal care items, telephone services, cleaning supplies, cars, sports, restaurants, computers, magazines, electronic equipment, stores, school supplies, credit cards – the list is virtually endless.

Considering all the different brands, I would like you to pick one of your **favourite brands** (which you **feel strongly attached to** or **which you would find hard not to have or use**). This brand should evoke powerful thoughts and feelings on your part. It should be a brand that you feel you know well enough to discuss in detail. Print the name of this brand in the space below:

For the remainder of the questions, please replace the phrase “**this brand**” with “**your favourite brand**” as selected in the box above, when reading the statements. In other words, assume every question relates to your chosen brand.

Direction: Please read the questions carefully and tick (✓) the box that you feel is the correct answer and/or key in the answer in the space provided. **Please try to answer all of the questions.**

Q1. How long have you been using this brand?

- | | | |
|---|--------------------------------------|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> less than 6 months | <input type="checkbox"/> 1 – 3 years | <input type="checkbox"/> 7 – 9 years |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 6 months – 1 year | <input type="checkbox"/> 4 – 6 years | <input type="checkbox"/> 10 years and above |

Q2. How often do you purchase this brand?

- | | | | |
|---|--|---|---------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Once a day or more | <input type="checkbox"/> Once a week | <input type="checkbox"/> Once a month | <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> A few times a week | <input type="checkbox"/> A few times a month | <input type="checkbox"/> Several times a year | |

Q3. When was the last time you purchased this brand?

- | | | |
|---|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Less than a week ago | <input type="checkbox"/> 3 – 4 weeks ago | <input type="checkbox"/> More than 6 months ago |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1 – 2 weeks ago | <input type="checkbox"/> 1 month – 6 months ago | <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ |

Q4. How often do you use this brand?

- | | | | |
|---|--|---|---------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Once a day or more | <input type="checkbox"/> Once a week | <input type="checkbox"/> Once a month | <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> A few times a week | <input type="checkbox"/> A few times a month | <input type="checkbox"/> Several times a year | |

Q5. Where do you usually shop for this brand? (Please tick as many as appropriate)

- | | | |
|--|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Brand's own store | <input type="checkbox"/> Supermarket | <input type="checkbox"/> Online Shops |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Company's website | <input type="checkbox"/> Department Store | <input type="checkbox"/> Others: _____ |

Q6. Where do you get the information about this brand? (Please tick as many as appropriate)

- | | | | |
|--|---|----------------------------------|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Company's Website | <input type="checkbox"/> Newsletter/Email | <input type="checkbox"/> Family | <input type="checkbox"/> Co-worker |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Social Media | <input type="checkbox"/> Magazines | <input type="checkbox"/> Friends | <input type="checkbox"/> Others: _____ |

Section 2: About Your Favourite Brand

Q7. Direction: Below is a series of statements about your thoughts and feelings toward the brand you wrote in the space above. **There are no right or wrong answers.** So, please try to answer each of the following questions. Please circle the number between “1” and “7” on each of the following statements.

Rating “1” means that you “**strongly disagree**” and “7” means you “**strongly agree**”.

Strongly _____ Neutral _____ Strongly
Disagree _____ Agree

I trust [this brand].	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
[This brand] is a socially responsible brand.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
[This brand] is reliable.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
[This brand] cares for the environment.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
This is an honest [brand].	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
[This brand] cares for its employees.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
[This brand] has made a real difference through its socially responsible actions.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I worry about being abandoned by [this brand] as a consumer.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I am comfortable having a close relationship with [this brand].	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
[This brand] changes how it treats me for no apparent reason.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
It is a comfortable feeling to depend on [this brand].	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I worry that [this brand] doesn't really like me as a consumer.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
It's easy for me to feel warm and friendly towards [this brand].	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I worry that [this brand] doesn't care about me as much as I care about [this brand].	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
It helps to turn to [this brand] in times of need.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
[This brand] makes a strong impression on my visual sense or other senses (e.g. touch and feel of the products).	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
[This brand] induces feelings and sentiments.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
[This brand] makes me feel like engaging in physical actions (e.g. work out).	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I engage in a lot of thinking when I encounter [this brand].	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I find [this brand] interesting in a sensory way (e.g. visually appealing).	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I do not have strong emotions for [this brand].	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
[This brand] results in physical experiences (e.g. feel powerful).	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
[This brand] stimulates my curiosity and problem solving.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
[This brand] does not appeal to my senses.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
[This brand] is an emotional brand.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
[This brand] is not action oriented (e.g. stimulate to act).	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
[This brand] does not make me think.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
When using [this brand], I feel controlled and pressured to act in certain ways.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
When using [this brand], I feel cared about.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
When using [this brand], I feel very capable and effective.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
When using [this brand], I feel free to be who I am.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I feel a lot of closeness with [this brand].	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
When using [this brand], I feel inadequate.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
When using [this brand], I have a say in what happens and can voice my opinion.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
When using [this brand], I often feel remote in my relationships.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
When using [this brand], I feel like a competent person.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Q8. Direction: Take a moment to think about your favourite brand. Think about the kind of person who typically uses this brand. Imagine this person in your mind and then describe this person using one or more personal adjectives such as, stylish, classy, masculine, sexy, old, athletic, or whatever personal adjectives you can use to describe the typical user of this brand. Please circle the number between “1” and “7” on each of the following statements.

Rating “1” means that you “strongly disagree” and “7” means you “strongly agree”.

Strongly _____ Neutral _____ Strongly
Disagree _____ Agree

[This brand] is consistent with how I see myself.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
[This brand] is a mirror image of the person I would like to be.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
The typical user of [this brand] is very much like how other people see me.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
[This brand] is a mirror image of me.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
[This brand] is similar to the person I would like to be.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
The typical user of [this brand] is consistent with how other people see me.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
[This brand] is similar to me.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
[This brand] is consistent with how I would like to be.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
The typical user of [this brand] has a similar image with how other people see me.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Q9. Direction: Please circle the number between “0” and “10” on each of the following statements.

Rating “0” means that you feel “not at all” and “10” means you feel “completely”.

Not at all ----- Completely

To what extent is [this brand] part of you and who you are?	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
To what extent are your thoughts and feelings toward [this brand] often automatic, coming to mind seemingly on their own?	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
To what extent do you feel that you are personally connected to [this brand]?	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
To what extent do your thoughts and feelings toward [this brand] come to you naturally and instantly?	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
To what extent do you feel emotionally bonded to [this brand]?	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
To what extent does the word [this brand] automatically evoke many good thoughts about the past, present, and future?	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
To what extent does [this brand] say something to other people about who you are?	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
To what extent do you have many thoughts about [this brand]?	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

Q10. Direction: Please circle the number between “1” and “7” on each of the following statements.

Rating “1” means that it “describes poorly” and “7” means it “describes very well”.

My feelings towards [this brand] can be characterized by:							
	Describes Poorly ----- Neutral ----- Describes Very Well						
Affection	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Peacefulness/Calmness	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Connected to	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Friendliness	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Passion	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Bonded to	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Love	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Delight	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Attached to	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Captivation	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Q11. Direction: Please circle the number between “1” and “7” on each of the following statements.

Rating “1” means that it is “not very likely” and “7” means it is “very likely”.

Not Very -----Neutral----- Very
Likely Likely

[This brand] is the only brand of this product category that I will buy.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I will recommend [this brand] to someone who seeks my advice.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I will continue to purchase [this brand] even if it increases price.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I say positive things about [this brand] to other people unprompted.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I intend to keep purchasing [this brand].	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I intend to encourage other people to buy [this brand].	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I forgive [this brand] when it makes mistakes.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
With other users of [this brand], I talk about how negative we feel about competing brand(s).	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I will forgive [this brand] for [specific negative information].	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
With other users of [this brand], I talk about competing brand(s) being inferior.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Given [this brand's] mistakes, I would condemn it.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
With other users of [this brand], I say negative things about competing brand(s).	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I would think favourably of [this brand] upon hearing [specific negative information].	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I talk about how negative I feel about competing brand(s) to other people.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
When I encounter others' (who use competing/other brand) misfortune, I feel happy.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I talk about how inferior competing brand(s) compare to [this brand] to other people.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I couldn't resist a little smile upon others' (who use competing/other brand) misfortune.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I say negative things about competing brand(s) to other people.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I enjoyed when a misfortune happened to others (who use competing/other brand).	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
My closet has unopened shopping bags of [this brand] in it.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I buy things from [this brand] that I don't need.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Others might consider me a shopaholic for [this brand].	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I buy things from [this brand] that I did not plan to buy.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Much of my life centres around buying things from [this brand].	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I consider myself an impulse purchaser for [this brand].	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Q12. Direction: Imagine that this [brand] disappoints you severely (e.g. infringing ethical standards or malfunctions that cause severe injuries or whatever wrong-doing you can think of). Please circle the number between “1” and “7” on each of the following statements. The intention of the survey is to capture your depth of negative feelings or actions towards this brand. Responses are anonymous and cannot, and will not, be traced back to any individual.

Rating “1” means that it “describes poorly” and “7” means that it “describes well”.

Describes -----Neutral----- Describes
Poorly Well

I would complain to government officials or other regulatory agencies about [this brand].	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I would make it one of my life's missions to damage [this brand].	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I would become obsessed over what I could do to get back at [this brand].	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I would become involved in organizations or clubs united against [this brand].	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
[This brand] is my enemy.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I would complain to trading standards or law enforcement agencies about [this brand].	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I would become fascinated about the various ways I can do harm to the [brand].	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I am a fanatic against [this brand].	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I would complain to [this brand's] customer service personnel.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I would be willing to weaken [this brand].	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I would complain to [this brand] company's headquarters.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I would imagine how to hurt the company that makes [this brand].	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I would complain to a consumer body about [this brand].	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I would complain to the press or media about [this brand].	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Section 3: About You.

Direction: Please read the questions carefully and tick (✓) the box that you feel is the correct answer and/or key in the answer in the space provided. Try to answer all of the questions.

Q13. Are you:

☐ Male ☐ Female

Q14. What is your age group?

☐ 16 – 24 ☐ 35 – 44 ☐ 55 – 64
☐ 25 – 34 ☐ 45 – 54 ☐ 65 and over

Q15. What is your Nationality? (If you have more than one Nationality, please specify all of them)

Please specify: _____

Q16. Are you:

☐ Single ☐ Married ☐ Cohabiting ☐ Divorced ☐ Other: _____

Q17. What is your Occupation?

Please specify: _____

Q18. Which of these best describe you?

☐ Full-time employment ☐ Self-employed ☐ Unemployed
☐ Part-time employment ☐ Retired ☐ Other: _____

Q19. What is your highest qualification attained?

☐ GCSE or equivalent ☐ Undergraduate Degree ☐ Doctoral Degree
☐ A-level or equivalent ☐ Master's Degree ☐ Other: _____

Q20. What is your Annual Income before Tax (in £)?

☐ Less than 10,000 ☐ 20,000 to 29,999 ☐ 40,000 to 59,999 ☐ 80,000 to 99,999
☐ 10,000 to 19,999 ☐ 30,000 to 39,999 ☐ 60,000 to 79,999 ☐ More than 100,000

Q21. Please choose one answer for each statement that best describes you. Please choose all that apply from the list below:

Social media user	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Technologically savvy	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Experienced shopper	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Risk taker	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Home owner	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Frequent cinema-goer	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Always want the latest model of a product	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Frequent flyer/traveller	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Car owner	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Shop mainly for those in household	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Set/fixed in your ways/behaviours	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Up to speed with news/current affairs	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No

Regular internet user	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Household's decision maker	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Daily viewer of TV	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Shop mainly for self	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Sports club member	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Into sustainability	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Children at home	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Into mobile purchasing	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Children not at home	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No

THANK YOU FOR YOUR PARTICIPATION AND PLEASE RETURN THIS TO:

ARNOLD JAPUTRA
FACULTY OF BUSINESS, OXFORD BROOKES UNIVERSITY
WHEATLEY CAMPUS, OX33 1HX

Appendix 6: Research Questionnaire (Redesigned)

Dear Sir/Madam,

I am a researcher from the Department of Marketing at Oxford Brookes University. As part of my research, I am currently investigating brands and how consumers feel about them.

It would be very helpful, if you could please fill out the following survey. **The survey takes approximately 15 minutes to complete.** You will be asked to complete a series of questions about your thoughts and feelings toward specific brands you know and use.

Your participation in this survey is completely voluntary and greatly appreciated. As participants, you reserve the right to leave this survey at any time without penalty and without explanation. The information you provide will only be used for academic purposes and will remain strictly confidential. Hereafter, you will be identified by number only; your name will never be associated with any of your answers.

Should you have any questions about the survey, you may contact me using the contact details provided below. Thank you very much for your time and co-operation.

Regards,

Arnold Japutra
Department of Marketing
Faculty of Business
Oxford Brookes University
Email: arnold.japutra-2011@brookes.ac.uk

THE BRAND ATTACHMENT SURVEY

Please think for a moment about all the different brands you purchase or use. Try to consider the whole range of brands that you purchase or use, for example, food products, clothing, airlines, beverages, telephone services, cleaning supplies, cars, sports, restaurants, computers, magazines, credit cards – the list is virtually endless.

Considering all the different brands, **I would like you to pick one of your favourite brands** (which you **feel strongly attached to** or **which you would find hard not to have or use**). This brand should evoke powerful thoughts and feelings on your part. It should be a brand that you feel you know well enough to discuss in detail. Print the name of this brand in the space below:

For the remainder of the questions, please replace the phrase “this brand” with “your favourite brand” as selected in the box above, when reading the statements. In other words, assume every question relates to your chosen brand. **There are no right or wrong answers. So, please try to answer each of the following questions.**

Section 1: About Your Choice of The Brand

Direction: Please read the questions carefully and tick (✓) the box that you feel is the correct answer and/or key in the answer in the space provided.

Q1. How long have you been using this brand?

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> less than 6 months | <input type="checkbox"/> 6 months – 1 year |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1 – 3 years | <input type="checkbox"/> 4 – 6 years |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 7 – 9 years | <input type="checkbox"/> 10 years and above |

Q2. How often do you purchase this brand?

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Once a day or more | <input type="checkbox"/> A few times a week |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Once a week | <input type="checkbox"/> A few times a month |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Once a month | <input type="checkbox"/> Several times a year |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ | |

Q3. When was the last time you purchased this brand?

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Less than a week ago | <input type="checkbox"/> 1 – 2 weeks ago |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 3 – 4 weeks ago | <input type="checkbox"/> 1 month – 6 months ago |
| <input type="checkbox"/> More than 6 months ago | <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ |

Q4. How often do you use this brand?

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Once a day or more | <input type="checkbox"/> A few times a week |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Once a week | <input type="checkbox"/> A few times a month |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Once a month | <input type="checkbox"/> Several times a year |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ | |

Q5. Where do you usually shop for this brand? (Please tick as many as appropriate)

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Brand's own store | <input type="checkbox"/> Company's website |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Supermarket | <input type="checkbox"/> Department Store |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Online Shops | <input type="checkbox"/> Others: _____ |

Q6. Where do you get the information about this brand?

(Please tick as many as appropriate)

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Company's Website | <input type="checkbox"/> Social Media |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Newsletter/Email | <input type="checkbox"/> Magazines |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Family | <input type="checkbox"/> Friends |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Co-worker | <input type="checkbox"/> Others: _____ |

Section 2: About Your Favourite Brand

Q7. Direction: Below is a series of statements about your thoughts and feelings toward the brand you wrote in the space above.

Please circle the number between “1” and “7” on each of the following statements. Rating “1” means that you “**strongly disagree**” and “7” means you “**strongly agree**”.

I trust [this brand]	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
[This brand] is a socially responsible brand.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
[This brand] is reliable.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
[This brand] cares for the environment.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
[This brand] is an honest brand.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
[This brand] cares for its employees.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
[This brand] has made a real difference through its socially responsible actions.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I worry about being abandoned by [this brand] as a consumer.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I am comfortable having a close relationship with [this brand].	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
[This brand] changes how it treats me for no apparent reason.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Please circle the number between “1” and “7” on each of the following statements. Rating “1” means that you “**strongly disagree**” and “7” means you “**strongly agree**”.

It is a comfortable feeling to depend on [this brand].	1 2 3 4 5 6 7
I worry that [this brand] doesn't really like me as a consumer.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7
It's easy for me to feel warm and friendly towards [this brand].	1 2 3 4 5 6 7
I worry that [this brand] doesn't care about me as much as I care about [this brand].	1 2 3 4 5 6 7
It helps to turn to [this brand] in times of need.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7
[This brand] makes a strong impression on my visual sense or other senses (e.g. touch and feel of the products).	1 2 3 4 5 6 7
[This brand] induces feelings and sentiments.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7
[This brand] makes me feel like engaging in physical actions (e.g. work out).	1 2 3 4 5 6 7
I engage in a lot of thinking when I encounter [this brand].	1 2 3 4 5 6 7
I find [this brand] interesting in a sensory way (e.g. visually appealing).	1 2 3 4 5 6 7
I do not have strong emotions for [this brand].	1 2 3 4 5 6 7
[This brand] results in physical experiences (e.g. feel powerful).	1 2 3 4 5 6 7
[This brand] stimulates my curiosity and problem solving.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7
[This brand] does not appeal to my senses.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7
[This brand] is an emotional brand.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7
[This brand] is not action oriented (e.g. stimulate to act).	1 2 3 4 5 6 7
[This brand] does not make me think.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7
When using [this brand], I feel controlled and pressured to act in certain ways.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7
When using [this brand], I feel cared about.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7
When using [this brand], I feel very capable and effective.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7
When using [this brand], I feel free to be who I am.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7
I feel a lot of closeness with [this brand].	1 2 3 4 5 6 7
When using [this brand], I feel inadequate.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7

When using [this brand], I have a say in what happens and can voice my opinion.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7
When using [this brand], I often feel remote in my relationships.
1 2 3 4 5 6 7
When using [this brand], I feel like a competent person.
1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Q8. Direction: Please circle the number between “1” and “7” on each of the following statements. Rating “1” means that it “**describes poorly**” and “7” means it “**describes very well**”.

My feelings towards [this brand] can be characterized by:

	Describes Poorly	Neutral	Describes Very Well
Affection	1 2 3 4 5 6 7		
Peacefulness	1 2 3 4 5 6 7		
Connected to	1 2 3 4 5 6 7		
Friendliness	1 2 3 4 5 6 7		
Passion	1 2 3 4 5 6 7		
Bonded to	1 2 3 4 5 6 7		
Delight	1 2 3 4 5 6 7		
Attached to	1 2 3 4 5 6 7		
Captivation	1 2 3 4 5 6 7		

Q9. Direction: Take a moment to think about your favourite brand. Think about the kind of person who typically uses this brand. Imagine this person in your mind and then describe this person using one or more personal adjectives such as, stylish, classy, masculine, sexy, old, athletic, or whatever personal adjectives you can use to describe the typical user of this brand.

Please circle the number between “1” and “7” on each of the following statements. Rating “1” means that you “**strongly disagree**” and “7” means you “**strongly agree**”.

[This brand] is consistent with how I see myself.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7
[This brand] is a mirror image of the person I would like to be.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7
The typical user of [this brand] is very much like how other people see me.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7
[This brand] is a mirror image of me.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7
[This brand] is similar to the person I would like to be.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7
The typical user of [this brand] is consistent with how other people see me.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7
[This brand] is similar to me.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7
[This brand] is consistent with how I would like to be.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7
The typical user of [this brand] has a similar image with how other people see me.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Q10. Direction: Please circle the number between “0” and “10” on each of the following statements. Rating “0” means that you feel “**not at all**” and “10” means you feel “**completely**”.

To what extent is [this brand] part of you and who you are?

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

To what extent are your thoughts and feelings toward [this brand] often automatic, coming to mind seemingly on their own?

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

To what extent do you feel that you are personally connected to [this brand]?

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

To what extent do your thoughts and feelings toward [this brand] come to you naturally and instantly?

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

To what extent do you feel emotionally bonded to [this brand]?

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

To what extent does the word [this brand] automatically evoke many good thoughts about the past, present, and future?

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

To what extent does [this brand] say something to other people about who you are?

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

To what extent do you have many thoughts about [this brand]?

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Q11. Direction: Please circle the number between “1” and “7” on each of the following statements. Rating “1” means that it is “**not very likely**” and “7” means it is “**very likely**”.

[This brand] is the only brand of this product category that I will buy.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

I will recommend [this brand] to someone who seeks my advice.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

I will continue to purchase [this brand] even if it increases price.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

I say positive things about [this brand] to other people unprompted.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

I intend to keep purchasing [this brand].

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

I intend to encourage other people to buy [this brand].

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

I forgive [this brand] when it makes mistakes.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

With other users of [this brand], I talk about how negative we feel about competing brand(s).

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

I will forgive [this brand] for [specific negative information].

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

With other users of [this brand], I talk about competing brand(s) being inferior.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

With other users of [this brand], I say negative things about competing brand(s).

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

I would think favourably of [this brand] upon hearing [specific negative information].

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

I talk about how negative I feel about competing brand(s) to other people.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

When I encounter others' (who use competing/other brand) misfortune, I feel happy.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

I talk about how inferior competing brand(s) compare to [this brand] to other people.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

I couldn't resist a little smile upon others' (who use competing/other brand) misfortune.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

I say negative things about competing brand(s) to other people.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

I enjoyed when a misfortune happened to others (who use competing/other brand).

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

My closet has unopened shopping bags of [this brand] in it.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

I buy things from [this brand] that I don't need.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Others might consider me a shopaholic for [this brand].

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

I buy things from [this brand] that I did not plan to buy.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Much of my life centres around buying things from [this brand].

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

I consider myself an impulse purchaser for [this brand].

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Q12. Direction: Imagine that [this brand] disappoints you severely (e.g. infringing ethical standards or malfunctions that cause severe injuries or whatever wrong-doing you can think of). The intention of the survey is to capture your depth of negative feelings or actions towards [this brand]. Responses are anonymous and cannot, and will not, be traced back to any individual.

Please circle the number between “1” and “7” on each of the following statements. Rating “1” means that it “**describes poorly**” and “7” means that it “**describes well**”.

I would make it one of my life's missions to damage [this brand].

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

I would become obsessed over what I could do to get back at [this brand].

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

[This brand] is my enemy.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Please circle the number between “1” and “7” on each of the following statements. Rating “1” means that it “describes poorly” and “7” means that it “describes well”.

I would complain to trading standards or law enforcement agencies about [this brand].

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

I am a fanatic against [this brand].

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

I would complain to [this brand's] customer service personnel.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

I would be willing to weaken [this brand].

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

I would imagine how to hurt the company that makes [this brand].

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

I would complain to a consumer body about [this brand].

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

I would complain to the press or media about [this brand].

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Section 3: About You.

Direction: Please read the questions carefully and tick (✓) the box that you feel is the correct answer and/or key in the answer in the space provided. Try to answer all of the questions.

Q13. Are you:

☐ Male ☐ Female

Q14. What is your age group?

☐ 16 – 24 ☐ 25 – 34 ☐ 35 – 44
☐ 45 – 54 ☐ 55 – 64 ☐ 65 and over

Q15. What is your Nationality? (If you have more than one Nationality, please specify all of them) Please specify:

Q16. Are you:

☐ Single ☐ Married
☐ Divorced ☐ Cohabiting
☐ Other: _____

Q17. What is your Occupation? Please specify:

Q18. Which of these best describe you?

☐ Full-time employment ☐ Part-time employment
☐ Self-employed ☐ Retired
☐ Unemployed ☐ Other: _____

Q19. What is your highest qualification attained?

☐ GCSE or equivalent ☐ A-level or equivalent
☐ Undergraduate Degree ☐ Master's Degree
☐ Doctoral Degree ☐ Other: _____

Q20. What is your Annual Income before Tax (in £)?

☐ Less than 10,000 ☐ 10,000 to 19,999
☐ 20,000 to 29,999 ☐ 30,000 to 39,999
☐ 40,000 to 59,999 ☐ 60,000 to 79,999
☐ 80,000 to 99,999 ☐ More than 100,000

Q21. Please choose one answer for each statement that best describes you. Please choose all that apply from the list below:

Social media user	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Technologically savvy	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Experienced shopper	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Risk taker	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Home owner	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Frequent cinema-goer	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Always want the latest model of a product	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Frequent flyer/traveller	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Car owner	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Shop mainly for those in household	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Set/fixed in your ways/behaviours	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Up to speed with news/current affairs	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Regular internet user	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Household's decision maker	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Daily viewer of TV	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Shop mainly for self	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Sports club member	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Into sustainability	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Children at home	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Into mobile purchasing	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Children not at home	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No

THANK YOU FOR YOUR PARTICIPATION

PLEASE RETURN YOUR COMPLETED QUESTIONNAIRE IN THE ENVELOPE PROVIDED TO:
ARNOLD JAPUTRA
FACULTY OF BUSINESS, OXFORD BROOKES UNIVERSITY
WHEATLEY CAMPUS, OX33 1HX

Appendix 7: Skewness and Kurtosis

	csr1	csr2	csr3	csr4	anx1	avd1	anx2	avd2	anx3	avd3	anx4	avd4	bes1	bea1	beb1
N Valid	432	432	432	432	432	432	432	432	432	432	432	432	432	432	432
Missing	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Mean	5.22	4.87	4.79	4.46	3.02	5.16	2.70	5.08	2.23	5.33	2.81	4.03	5.06	4.72	3.24
Std. Deviation	1.322	1.305	1.250	1.330	1.844	1.476	1.640	1.429	1.506	1.339	1.641	1.815	1.642	1.659	1.809
Skewness	-.129	.095	.333	.177	.559	-.746	.537	-.735	1.029	-.835	.413	-.245	-.787	-.597	.290
Std. Error of Skewness	.117	.117	.117	.117	.117	.117	.117	.117	.117	.117	.117	.117	.117	.117	.117
Kurtosis	-.673	-.236	-.141	.286	-.786	.236	-.670	.522	.166	.848	-.870	-.777	.036	-.167	-.897
Std. Error of Kurtosis	.234	.234	.234	.234	.234	.234	.234	.234	.234	.234	.234	.234	.234	.234	.234

	bei1	bes2	bea2	beb2	bei2	bes3	bea3	beb3	bei3	bra1	brr1	brc1	bra2	brr2	brc2
N Valid	432	432	432	432	432	432	432	432	432	432	432	432	432	432	432
Missing	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Mean	3.66	4.89	4.24	3.73	3.45	5.16	4.04	4.21	4.29	5.29	3.89	4.31	4.54	4.46	6.08
Std. Deviation	1.805	1.688	1.802	1.857	1.830	1.613	1.758	1.686	1.729	1.687	1.704	1.653	1.723	1.670	1.294
Skewness	.082	-.725	-.109	-.051	.143	-.535	-.254	-.097	-.132	-.616	-.240	-.509	-.496	-.463	-1.371
Std. Error of Skewness	.117	.117	.117	.117	.117	.117	.117	.117	.117	.117	.117	.117	.117	.117	.117
Kurtosis	-.944	-.129	-.985	-1.001	-.995	-.460	-.809	-.577	-.737	-.699	-.677	-.338	-.359	-.326	1.099
Std. Error of Kurtosis	.234	.234	.234	.234	.234	.234	.234	.234	.234	.234	.234	.234	.234	.234	.234

	bra3	brr3	brc3	asc1	isc1	ssc1	asc2	isc2	ssc2	asc3	isc3	ssc3	bsc1	bp1	bsc2
N Valid	432	432	432	432	432	432	432	432	432	432	432	432	432	432	432
Missing	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Mean	3.68	5.62	4.56	4.98	4.11	4.27	3.74	4.17	4.25	4.33	4.45	4.25	5.19	5.08	5.12
Std. Deviation	1.755	1.509	1.602	1.462	1.672	1.462	1.501	1.594	1.467	1.479	1.612	1.497	2.834	2.846	2.892
Skewness	-.038	-.669	-.587	-.765	-.289	-.289	-.159	-.322	-.352	-.566	-.453	-.462	-.449	-.389	-.341
Std. Error of Skewness	.117	.117	.117	.117	.117	.117	.117	.117	.117	.117	.117	.117	.117	.117	.117
Kurtosis	-.785	-.718	.043	.668	-.419	.112	-.172	-.275	.083	.199	-.185	.093	-.755	-.730	-.778
Std. Error of Kurtosis	.234	.234	.234	.234	.234	.234	.234	.234	.234	.234	.234	.234	.234	.234	.234

	bp2	bsc3	bp3	bsc4	bp4	ip1	ir1	ip2	ir2	ip3	ir3	rni1	rni2	rni4
N Valid	432	432	432	432	432	432	432	432	432	432	432	432	432	432
Missing	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Mean	5.39	5.07	6.05	5.42	4.52	4.33	5.99	5.51	5.42	6.17	5.08	4.47	3.94	4.03
Std. Deviation	2.857	3.034	2.930	2.988	2.845	2.087	1.135	1.430	1.504	1.026	1.517	1.518	1.417	1.473
Skewness	-.422	-.302	-.591	-.451	-.001	-.311	-1.288	-1.046	-1.007	-1.309	-.627	-.372	-.274	-.377
Std. Error of Skewness	.117	.117	.117	.117	.117	.117	.117	.117	.117	.117	.117	.117	.117	.117
Kurtosis	-.653	-.976	-.559	-.819	-.992	-1.229	1.957	.872	.660	1.641	.029	-.078	.012	-.127
Std. Error of Kurtosis	.234	.234	.234	.234	.234	.234	.234	.234	.234	.234	.234	.234	.234	.234

Appendix 8: Exploratory Factor Analysis to Assess Common-Method Variance

Component	Total Variance Explained								
	Initial Eigenvalues			Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings			Rotation Sums of Squared Loadings		
	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
1	6.717	29.205	29.205	6.717	29.205	29.205	2.971	12.917	12.917
2	2.334	10.148	39.353	2.334	10.148	39.353	2.654	11.541	24.458
3	2.018	8.772	48.125	2.018	8.772	48.125	2.445	10.631	35.088
4	1.589	6.908	55.033	1.589	6.908	55.033	2.263	9.838	44.926
5	1.378	5.990	61.023	1.378	5.990	61.023	2.121	9.220	54.147
6	1.272	5.530	66.553	1.272	5.530	66.553	2.029	8.820	62.967
7	1.169	5.083	71.635	1.169	5.083	71.635	1.994	8.668	71.635
8	.730	3.173	74.808						
9	.634	2.755	77.563						
10	.596	2.590	80.153						
11	.577	2.511	82.664						
12	.486	2.114	84.778						
13	.453	1.968	86.746						
14	.423	1.838	88.584						
15	.401	1.745	90.329						
16	.373	1.620	91.948						
17	.357	1.550	93.499						
18	.336	1.462	94.961						
19	.278	1.210	96.171						
20	.262	1.139	97.310						
21	.245	1.067	98.377						
22	.204	.886	99.263						
23	.169	.737	100.000						

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

Appendix 9: Hierarchical Regression – Brand Loyalty

Regression

Descriptive Statistics

	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
BL	5.8893	1.01960	432
ISC	4.2404	1.46783	432
SBE	5.0331	1.32789	432
BR	4.3245	1.34301	432
CSR	4.8211	1.07775	432
BA	5.4221	2.53286	432

Variables Entered/Removed^a

Model	Variables Entered	Variables Removed	Method
1	CSR, SBE, ISC, BR ^b	.	Enter
2	BA ^b	.	Enter

a. Dependent Variable: BL

b. All requested variables entered.

Model Summary^c

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Change Statistics					Durbin-Watson
					R Square Change	F Change	df1	df2	Sig. F Change	
1	.346 ^a	.120	.111	.96111	.120	14.512	4	427	.000	1.752
2	.390 ^b	.152	.142	.94436	.032	16.289	1	426	.000	

a. Predictors: (Constant), CSR, SBE, ISC, BR

b. Predictors: (Constant), CSR, SBE, ISC, BR, BA

c. Dependent Variable: BL

ANOVA^a

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	53.622	4	13.405	14.512	.000 ^b
	Residual	394.437	427	.924		
	Total	448.059	431			
2	Regression	68.148	5	13.630	15.283	.000 ^c
	Residual	379.910	426	.892		
	Total	448.059	431			

a. Dependent Variable: BL

b. Predictors: (Constant), CSR, SBE, ISC, BR

c. Predictors: (Constant), CSR, SBE, ISC, BR, BA

Coefficients^a

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	95.0% Confidence Interval for B		Correlations			Collinearity Statistics	
		B	Std. Error	Beta			Lower Bound	Upper Bound	Zero-order	Partial	Part	Tolerance	VIF
1	(Constant)	3.910	.278		14.084	.000	3.364	4.456					
	ISC	.008	.037	.012	.219	.826	-.064	.080	.150	.011	.010	.737	1.356
	SBE	.202	.038	.264	5.277	.000	.127	.278	.293	.247	.240	.826	1.210
	BR	.040	.041	.053	.970	.333	-.041	.121	.190	.047	.044	.701	1.426
	CSR	.156	.044	.165	3.549	.000	.070	.243	.187	.169	.161	.951	1.051
2	(Constant)	4.080	.276		14.782	.000	3.538	4.623					
	ISC	-.031	.037	-.044	-.819	.413	-.104	.043	.150	-.040	-.037	.689	1.452
	SBE	.174	.038	.226	4.525	.000	.098	.249	.293	.214	.202	.797	1.254
	BR	-.019	.043	-.025	-.436	.663	-.103	.066	.190	-.021	-.019	.621	1.610
	CSR	.134	.044	.142	3.076	.002	.048	.220	.187	.147	.137	.936	1.068
	BA	.092	.023	.229	4.036	.000	.047	.137	.310	.192	.180	.620	1.613

a. Dependent Variable: BL

Excluded Variables^a

Model	Beta In	t	Sig.	Partial Correlation	Collinearity Statistics		
					Tolerance	VIF	Minimum Tolerance
1 BA	.229 ^b	4.036	.000	.192	.620	1.613	.620

a. Dependent Variable: BL

b. Predictors in the Model: (Constant), CSR, SBE, ISC, BR

Collinearity Diagnostics^a

Model	Dimension	Eigenvalue	Condition Index	Variance Proportions					
				(Constant)	ISC	SBE	BR	CSR	BA
1	1	4.804	1.000	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	
	2	.077	7.899	.05	.50	.00	.06	.18	
	3	.052	9.574	.00	.25	.59	.03	.20	
	4	.048	10.056	.01	.25	.15	.91	.00	
	5	.019	15.873	.94	.00	.26	.00	.62	
2	1	5.698	1.000	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00
	2	.121	6.851	.04	.01	.01	.00	.06	.58
	3	.065	9.345	.01	.75	.00	.01	.11	.26
	4	.052	10.447	.00	.13	.63	.01	.22	.01
	5	.045	11.238	.01	.11	.07	.98	.01	.10
	6	.018	17.639	.95	.01	.28	.00	.60	.05

a. Dependent Variable: BL

Residuals Statistics^a

	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
Predicted Value	4.7081	6.9981	5.8893	.39764	432
Residual	-3.73667	1.82582	.00000	.93886	432
Std. Predicted Value	-2.971	2.789	.000	1.000	432
Std. Residual	-3.957	1.933	.000	.994	432

a. Dependent Variable: BL

Appendix 10: Hierarchical Regression – Resilience to Negative Information

Regression

Descriptive Statistics

	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
RNI	4.1466	1.18344	432
ISC	4.2404	1.46783	432
SBE	5.0331	1.32789	432
BR	4.3245	1.34301	432
CSR	4.8211	1.07775	432
BA	5.4221	2.53286	432

Variables Entered/Removed^a

Model	Variables Entered	Variables Removed	Method
1	CSR, SBE, ISC, BR ^b	.	Enter
2	BA ^b	.	Enter

a. Dependent Variable: RNI

b. All requested variables entered.

Model Summary^c

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Change Statistics					Durbin-Watson
					R Square Change	F Change	df1	df2	Sig. F Change	
1	.354 ^a	.125	.117	1.11187	.125	15.318	4	427	.000	2.024
2	.398 ^b	.158	.148	1.09211	.033	16.594	1	426	.000	

a. Predictors: (Constant), CSR, SBE, ISC, BR

b. Predictors: (Constant), CSR, SBE, ISC, BR, BA

c. Dependent Variable: RNI

ANOVA^a

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	75.748	4	18.937	15.318	.000 ^b
	Residual	527.884	427	1.236		
	Total	603.632	431			
2	Regression	95.539	5	19.108	16.021	.000 ^c
	Residual	508.092	426	1.193		
	Total	603.632	431			

a. Dependent Variable: RNI

b. Predictors: (Constant), CSR, SBE, ISC, BR

c. Predictors: (Constant), CSR, SBE, ISC, BR, BA

Coefficients^a

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	95.0% Confidence Interval for B		Correlations			Collinearity Statistics	
	B	Std. Error	Beta			Lower Bound	Upper Bound	Zero-order	Partial	Part	Tolerance	VIF
1	(Constant)	2.043	.321	6.360	.000	1.411	2.674					
	ISC	.011	.042	.269	.788	-.072	.095	.170	.013	.012	.737	1.356
	SBE	.026	.044	.299	.561	-.061	.113	.131	.028	.026	.826	1.210
	BR	.217	.048	.247	4.565	.124	.311	.302	.216	.207	.701	1.426
	CSR	.204	.051	.186	4.012	.104	.305	.240	.191	.182	.951	1.051
2	(Constant)	2.241	.319	7.021	.000	1.614	2.869					
	ISC	-.034	.043	-.042	-.779	-.119	.051	.170	-.038	-.035	.689	1.452
	SBE	-.008	.044	-.009	-.177	-.095	.079	.131	-.009	-.008	.797	1.254
	BR	.149	.050	.169	2.997	.051	.247	.302	.144	.133	.621	1.610
	CSR	.179	.050	.163	3.539	.079	.278	.240	.169	.157	.936	1.068
	BA	.107	.026	.230	4.074	.056	.159	.332	.194	.181	.620	1.613

a. Dependent Variable: RNI

Excluded Variables^a

Model	Beta In	t	Sig.	Partial Correlation	Collinearity Statistics		
					Tolerance	VIF	Minimum Tolerance
1 BA	.230 ^b	4.074	.000	.194	.620	1.613	.620

a. Dependent Variable: RNI

b. Predictors in the Model: (Constant), CSR, SBE, ISC, BR

Collinearity Diagnostics^a

Model	Dimension	Eigenvalue	Condition Index	Variance Proportions					
				(Constant)	ISC	SBE	BR	CSR	BA
1	1	4.804	1.000	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	
	2	.077	7.899	.05	.50	.00	.06	.18	
	3	.052	9.574	.00	.25	.59	.03	.20	
	4	.048	10.056	.01	.25	.15	.91	.00	
	5	.019	15.873	.94	.00	.26	.00	.62	
2	1	5.698	1.000	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00
	2	.121	6.851	.04	.01	.01	.00	.06	.58
	3	.065	9.345	.01	.75	.00	.01	.11	.26
	4	.052	10.447	.00	.13	.63	.01	.22	.01
	5	.045	11.238	.01	.11	.07	.98	.01	.10
	6	.018	17.639	.95	.01	.28	.00	.60	.05

a. Dependent Variable: RNI

Residuals Statistics^a

	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
Predicted Value	2.9384	5.4824	4.1466	.47082	432
Residual	-3.35768	3.08445	.00000	1.08576	432
Std. Predicted Value	-2.566	2.837	.000	1.000	432
Std. Residual	-3.074	2.824	.000	.994	432

a. Dependent Variable: RNI